INSIDE: CHESTNUT & PEAR CHEESECAKE * WINTER VEG TARTE TATIN * FRUITY PANETTONE

COOK VEGETARIAN

Christmas!

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ISSUE 74 | JANUARY 2015 £3.99

New Festive Favourites

The alternative Christmas cake...


p17
Boxing Day tarts


p13
Foodie tree decs


p37
Italian canapés


p27
Celebration cakes















New Festive Range 2014

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(the Festive Range will be available to purchase from Monday 3rd November 2014 to Saturday 31st January 2015 in selected Health Stores and Online)









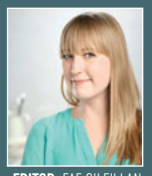
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T : 01536 400557 F: 01536 408878
info@vbitesfoods.com www.vbitesfoods.com



EDITOR: FAE GILFILLAN
FAE@COOKVEG.CO.UK



DEPUTY EDITOR:
HANNAH TUDOR
HANNAH@COOKVEG.CO.UK



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QUICK FESTIVE FIXES



JAMES MARTIN
WARMING SOUL FOOD



YOTAM OTTOLENGI
THE VEG EXPERT IS BACK!



LESLEY WATERS
IN DEFENCE OF SPROUTS

This Month...

Welcome to *Cook Vegetarian.* Christmas can often feel like you're spinning plates. You have to research the menu, plan the shopping and, if you can, cook and freeze-ahead. And that's just the food!

But it needn't be stressful. Here, we've brought together some of the best names in food – Jamie Oliver, James Martin, Gino D'Acampo and Lesley Waters to name a few – to share their favourite recipes to get you through this often hectic time of year.

And we've got inspiration coming out of our ears, with tips on how to improve your Christmas meal in our new-look Cookery School section, the ultimate Bake Off festive cakes and Sophie Wright cooks up meals that are on the table in 20 minutes – perfect for the party season.

So, put your feet up and tuck in to our ideas for this magical time of year...

Fae x

"Celebrate with us! Whether it's festive mains, advice on staying organised, or the Christmas cake for people who, well, hate Christmas cake (below), we've got it all. Have a great one!"

TURN TO P8 FOR THE RECIPE

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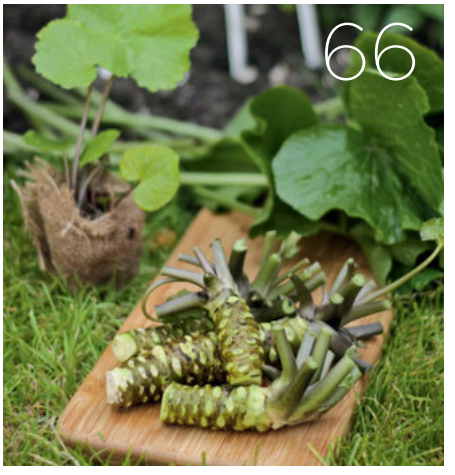
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WIN!
KITCHEN KIT FOR YOUR HOME...

This month, one lucky reader will win £200 worth of beautiful Ochre and Ocre kitchen textiles, while another will win a microwave! Turn to p81 to find out how to apply.
Or, write in to win a stunning chopping board worth £49 on p10

COVER: TIME SYNDICATION/CHRIS ALACK

Calorie and fat analysis provided by Nutracheck.co.uk, the UK's largest online calorie counter, (over 100,000 foods). Download the App – search for 'Nutracheck' in the App Store or Play Store.

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January's Recipes

All of the full-length recipes in this issue of *Cook Vegetarian* are listed here, but remember – there are lots more tips & recipe ideas throughout!





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COOK VEGETARIAN

GENERAL ENQUIRIES
☎01206 508627
fae@cookveg.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES
☎0844 856 0648
cookvegetarian@servicehelpline.co.uk

www.cookveg.co.uk
www.facebook.com/cookvegetarian
www.twitter.com/cookveg

25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY

Publishing Director
Helen Tudor

Group Editor
Charlotte Smith
charlotte.smith@aceville.co.uk

Group Advertising Manager
Daniel Lodge
01206 505951 daniel@aceville.co.uk

Advertising Manager
Lee Forster
01206 505928 lee@cookveg.co.uk

Art Editor
Matt Sumner

Designers
Laura Robertson, Louise Abbott

Ad Production
Angela Scrivener

Photography
CliQQ Photography www.cliqq.co.uk

Promotions Manager
Liz Tuthill,
01206 505927 liz.tuthill@aceville.co.uk

Licensing & Content Syndication
David Mason
01206 505923 david.mason@aceville.com

Accounts
Joy Loveday 01206 505914

Subscriptions/Back Issues
Tel: 0844 856 0648
Overseas: +44 (0) 1795 414906
Email:
cookvegetarian@servicehelpline.co.uk

Marketing Executive
Callum Burgess
01206 508605
callum.burgess@aceville.co.uk

Design/Reprographics/Typesetting
19 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester

Publisher
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Kitchen notebook

Discover what's piping hot in the world of meat-free cooking



Iced Rosette Ginger Cake

Makes 10
Ready in 55 mins

✹ 125g butter ✹ 125 muscovado sugar ✹ 200g golden syrup, plus 2 tbsp ✹ 3 pieces Waitrose Chinese Stem Ginger, finely chopped, plus 2 tbsp syrup from the jar ✹ 250g Homepride self-raising flour ✹ 3 tsp ground ginger ✹ 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda ✹ 50g essential Waitrose Sultanas ✹ 2 large free-range eggs, beaten ✹ 250ml milk large ✹ 500g Waitrose Christmas Ready-to-roll White Icing ✹ icing sugar, for dusting

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Grease and line the base of a 20cm round cake tin.
2 Place the butter, sugar, 200g golden syrup and the chopped ginger and syrup together in a small pan and gently heat, stirring.
3 Place the flour, ground ginger, bicarbonate of soda and sultanas in a large bowl.
4 In a jug, whisk together the eggs and milk. Pour the melted syrup mixture and the egg mixture into the bowl of flour and beat well. Pour the mixture into the tin and bake for 35-40 minutes.
5 Leave the cake to cool in its tin before turning out onto a serving plate upside down. Brush with extra golden syrup.
6 Roll out the icing on a sugar-dusted surface to the thickness of a pound coin. Stamp out 3cm discs and arrange in an overlapping ring around the edges of the cake, moving towards the centre. Leave the icing to set for a couple of hours before serving.

PER SERVING: 557 CALS, 21.8G FAT



FESTIVE FINERY

If you can't go all out for Christmas, when can you? This opulent selection of tableware from Marks & Spencer is sure to make an impression on your guests this year. If you keep the plates and cutlery simple you can dress up the rest of the table. Prices start from £3.

Xmas is here!

Christmas dinner should be the best quality to ensure it has the wow factor. Anthony Davison's from www.bigbarn.co.uk explains why buying local is best:

Save money Supermakets like us to believe they are always the best value, but that's normally not the case. Independent stores deal directly with farmers which saves you pounds.

Tell a story Wouldn't it be lovely to tell your guests that the sprouts were picked just a few days ago from a field just the other side of the village?

Feel Good Factor One of the nicest things about shopping locally is the knowledge that you've helped your local community by keeping money within the region you live. We can all drink to that!



NEW VEGGIE FAN!

Tom Parker Bowles palate has turned vegetarian...

"When I was young and started off as a food writer I looked down my nose at vegetarians, but as I've grown older Iv'e moved towards it. There are superb veggie chefs out there spreading the word, and lots of people are embracing it because it makes sense from so many angles – budget-wise in particular. I don't do it to feel pious or virtuous, I just genuinely love vegetables and think they're under-appreciated as a foundation for an awful lot of meals. We have an ideal climate for growing fantastic vegetables – peas and broad beans with a sprinkling of sea salt make for a delicious light lunch. There's really nothing better than homegrown vegetables!"

What do you think about Tom's comments? Tweet us @cookveg

STUFFED PORTOBELLO MUSHROOMS

Serves 4
Ready in 30 mins

• 8 large portobello mushrooms • low-calorie cooking spray • 1 small onion, finely chopped • 4 garlic cloves, crushed • small bag of baby leaf spinach, roughly chopped • 3 roasted red peppers in brine, rinsed and roughly chopped • 1 tsp dried chilli flakes • 1 tsp rosemary, finely chopped, plus sprigs to garnish • 4 tbsp low-fat natural cottage cheese • salt and black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. Wipe the mushrooms clean with damp kitchen paper, then carefully remove and dice the stems. Spray a large non-stick frying pan with low-calorie cooking spray and place over a medium heat. When hot, add the mushroom stems, onion and garlic and cook for five minutes.
2 Add the spinach, peppers, chilli and rosemary and stir-fry for three minutes. Take the pan off the heat and add the cottage cheese. Season to taste and stir well. Fill the mushroom caps with the spinach mixture, spread them out on a non-stick baking tray and bake for 15-20 minutes. Arrange the mushrooms on a platter and garnish with rosemary sprigs to serve.



RECIPE TAKEN FROM A SLIMMING WORLD CHRISTMAS (£4.95, WWW.SLIMMINGWORLD.COM) PHOTO BY LARA HOLMES.

PERFECT PLATTER

ENTERTAINING IS EASY WITH THESE THREE CHEESES MADE WITH VEGGIE RENNET



Goatalicious

Capricorn Goat's Cheese, £2.25 for 100g, is soft and creamy in texture, which contrasts nicely with the mellow goaty flavour.

The blues

No cheeseboard is complete without a good blue, and this Shepherds Purse Yorkshire Blue, £2.50 from M&S, is a gorgeous choice.

US import

Jarlsberg is America's most imported cheese. Try it today. Find your stockist at www.jarlsberg.com/uk

HOW TO USE UP... NUTS

Homemade butter
Blitz your nuts with just enough water to turn into paste. Add honey or butter to emulsify.

Chocolate cluster
Melt chocolate before pouring into a lined tin. Sprinkle with chopped nuts and edible glitter. Chill until set.

Walnut salad
Combine spinach, sliced pear, walnuts and crumbled blue cheese. Serve with a sharp dressing.

Christmas Sparkle

CREATE A LITTLE SEASONAL MAGIC WITH THESE THREE LUXURIES

1 Truffle treats
The **Rudolph Bauble Red Velvet Truffles, £6.95**, are a lovely accompaniment to after-dinner coffee. If you can fit in any more! **www.prestat.co.uk**



2 Noel flavours
Looking for the most delicious pud? **The Betty's Large Pudding With Chocolate and Orange, £20.95**, is up there with the best we've tried. The dark chocolate pieces make it very moreish!



3 Indulgent dessert
This Waitrose **Seriously Frozen Raspberry & Pistachio Entremets, £5.99**, is a French layered dessert with that will make a lovely option on the big day.



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Over to you

We'd love to hear your news and views, favourites recipes and comments on anything you've read in *Cook Veg*, and you could win a fantastic prize!

STAR LETTER

For this canapé recipe and more go to www.cookveg.co.uk





WIN!

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Write us a star letter and you could win this beautiful Harch Wood Large Paddle Board, worth £49.99. As with all Harch Wood products, their new large Paddle Board is handmade, so every product is slightly different. The lucky reader can choose either an Ash or Elm large Paddle Board which measures a generous 51 x 28cm. The New Harch Wood collection also includes a variety of chopping boards, pizza board with cutter, serving boards, condiments caddy, display boards, serving boards with dipping bowls and much more! For more information, visit www.harchwoodcouture.com

Christmas without nuts

I love the magazine, I just wonder if it would be possible to show more recipes without nuts in the ingredients? I am a vegetarian with a fatal nut allergy. I find I am always falling back to the same few recipes and would like a change. It is particularly bad at Christmas as almost every veggie item seems to contain nuts.

Hilary Syddall, by email

It's true, so many veggie recipes contain nuts. We have ensured a healthy balance between nut and nut-free recipes. Why not try these carrot and cumin pancake canapés to start?

Family traditions

Thank you for the features from your columnists in the last issue (December 2014). I really enjoyed what Lisa Faulkner said about her grandmother's cooking as it reminded me that I haven't tried recipes from my childhood for a long time. This Christmas I am hoping to cook up some family recipes I'd long-forgotten!

Sarah Sage, by email

A meat-free Xmas

For most of my adult life I have been a meat reducer and have vegetarian meals during the week, with a small amount of meat at the weekend. However, I have been fully vegetarian for the past two months and feel like I would like to continue. I am a little worried about Christmas time though. I know there are lots of great ready-made options for vegetarians available in the shops, but I would like to make my own food too. Any advice would be gratefully received!

Kerry Crawford, by email

Thank you for getting in touch. This issue we have lots of vegetarian Christmas recipes for you to try, including: Jamie Oliver's Butter and Sage Gnudi, a beautiful Winter Vegetable Tarte Tatin and a selection of free-form tarts with delicious fillings such as Leek and Cheddar, Goat's Cheese and Cranberry Filling and Butternut Squash and Rosemary.

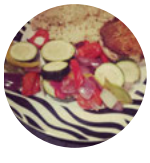
We've also got party bites, desserts and side dishes covered through out. Don't forget to visit our website for even more inspiration – it has a selection devoted to all things Christmas - www.cookveg.co.uk/christmas

In my kitchen...

I use 0% fat Greek yoghurt in my baking instead of eggs. This is great for people with egg allergies and also a healthy, delicious alternative.

Liz Denial, by email

What you're cooking this month...



@thetruthfairie has feasted on these roasted veggies and herby couscous



@TSOMIntl has created potatoes with extra flavour! Including thyme, rosemary and Tsom's Tesmi oil



@MinnaNix Is roasting up some beautiful festive Brussel sprouts!

OUR FAVOURITE ONLINE COMMENT THIS MONTH...

I'm reading old issues of *Cook Vegetarian* and I get just as much joy from reading them this time around! My favourite recipes get copied into my recipe book, I could never cut them out as I like to keep the magazines.

Julia Ann Kerr, via Facebook. Share your comments www.facebook.co.uk/cookvegetarian

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The Magic of Christmas

Make your festivities sparkle with mouth-watering Yuletide bakes from The Great British Bake Off

FRANGIPANE MINCE PIES

£+ GF

Makes 24
Ready in 50 mins, plus chilling time

For the frangipane
130g butter, softened
130g caster sugar
2 medium free-range eggs
2 tsp dark rum
2 tbsp plain flour
150g ground almonds
400g jar of mincemeat
icing sugar, for dusting

For the pastry
300g plain flour, plus extra for dusting
pinch of salt
135g cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes
55g vegetable shortening, cut into cubes (see overleaf)
2-3 tbsp ice-cold water

1 For the pastry, put the flour and salt into a large bowl and, using your fingers, gently rub in the butter and vegetable shortening until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add enough chilled water, a little at a time, for it to come together in a soft dough. Knead gently into a ball, wrap in clingfilm and chill for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
2 For the frangipane, cream the butter and sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in the eggs and rum, then fold in the flour and ground almonds.
3 Roll out half the chilled pastry on a lightly-floured surface to 3mm thick. Stamp out 12 rounds using a 7.5cm fluted pastry cutter, then use to line a 12-hole bun tin. Repeat with the remaining pastry to line a second tin. Place a teaspoonful of mincemeat in each pastry case.
4 Top each mince pie with a heaped teaspoonful of the frangipane mixture, place in the heated oven and bake for 20-25 minutes until golden. Cool on a wire rack before dusting with icing sugar and serving.

PER SERVING: 266 CALS, 15.8G FAT

"Mince pies are the very essence of Christmas, and these are a far cry from the typical solid, shortbready, shop-bought varieties. There is no shame in using a jar of mincemeat, or even, if you are short of time, some ready-made shortcrust pastry. The soft frangipane topping elevates these from humble mince pies to show-stoppers"



COULD YOU BE THE NEXT GBBO CHAMPION?

Fancy yourself as a bit of a baker? The Great British Bake Off is returning in 2015 and the production team is currently looking for the next batch of contestants to take part. If you, or someone you know, can turn out a terrific tart, produce a perfect pie or serve up a sublime sponge, now is the time to apply! For more information, or an application form, visit www.thegreatbritishbakeoff.co.uk. Good luck!

STAINED GLASS TREE BISCUITS

£+

Makes 30-35 biscuits
Ready in 40 mins

1 tsp orange extract
1 tbsp milk
12 coloured boiled sweets
125g butter, softened
60g caster sugar
200g plain flour, plus extra for dusting

1 Put the sweets into freezer bags, keeping each colour in a separate bag,

"Everyone's busy at Christmas – but nobody wants to be stressed! One of the best ways to enjoy it calmly is to prepare ahead, and having this beautiful spiced chocolate cake waiting in your freezer is the perfect solution. Everyone will want a slice, or two!"

and bash with a rolling pin until they break into little pebbles of sugar. Set aside.

2 Using a hand-held electric whisk, beat the butter and sugar together in a bowl, until pale and creamy. Sift in the flour, then add the orange extract and the milk. Use your hands to mix everything together into a ball of dough. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for 10-15 minutes. Meanwhile, heat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 and line two baking sheets with non-stick baking paper.

3 Lightly flour a work surface and roll out half the dough to about 5mm thick. Using your choice of festive biscuit cutters, cut out shapes and then use smaller decorative cutters to stamp out shapes from the middle of each biscuit. Carefully transfer the biscuits to the lined baking sheets, using a spatula. Repeat with the remaining dough, and re-roll the trimmings to make more biscuits.

4 Put one good pinch of the crushed sweet pebbles into the middle of each biscuit hole. Place in the heated oven and bake for 15-18 minutes, until the biscuits are just golden and the sweets have melted and filled the cut out areas. Whilst still warm, use a skewer to make holes in the top of each biscuit so you can thread them with string or ribbon to hang on your tree.

5 Leave to cool on the baking sheets until the sweets have set hard, then transfer to a wire rack. Once completely cool, thread with a string or fine ribbon and hang on your tree.

PER BISCUIT (35 BISCUITS): 62 CALS, 3.1G FAT

THINK AHEAD

You can freeze the bundt cake at the end of step 4, before glazing it, on a baking sheet until solid, then wrap well in baking paper and clingfilm or foil and freeze for up to three months. Defrost fully before glazing.

EDD KIMBER'S SPICED CHOCOLATE BUNDT CAKE

Makes 1 large cake
Ready in 1 hr 10 mins

200g unsalted butter, diced, plus extra for greasing
30g cocoa powder
100ml hot water
200g dark chocolate (60-70% cocoa solids), roughly chopped
300g light muscovado sugar
4 large free-range eggs
175g self-raising flour
1 tsp baking powder
3 tsp ground ginger
2 tsp ground mixed spice
1 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
40g chopped glacé or crystallised ginger

For the glaze:
300ml double cream
160g dark chocolate (60-70% cocoa solids), finely chopped

1 Heat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4 and grease a 25cm diameter, 2 lt bundt tin well, making sure to get into all of the crevices, or the cake may stick to the tin.

2 Put the cocoa into a small bowl and pour over the hot water, whisking together until smooth. Put the butter and chocolate in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water, and melt, stirring occasionally. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly.

3 Put the sugar and eggs in a large bowl and, using an electric mixer, whisk until thick and pale. With the mixer still running, pour in the chocolate and mix until smooth and fully combined.

4 Whisk together the flour, baking powder and spices in a separate bowl. Sift the dry ingredients over the chocolate mixture and fold together until no lumps remain. Add the ginger and the cocoa mixture and mix to combine. Pour into the prepared tin, then place on a baking sheet, transfer to the heated oven and bake for 40-45 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the thickest part of the cake comes out clean. Leave to cool in the tin for about 10 minutes before carefully inverting onto a wire rack set over a parchment-lined baking tray to cool completely.

5 To make the glaze, put the cream and chocolate into a medium saucepan and place over a low-medium heat, stirring regularly until the chocolate has melted and you have a smooth mixture. Set aside to cool for a few minutes. Pour the glaze over the cooled cake, trying to cover the entire surface. Allow the glaze to set before carefully transferring to a plate to serve.

PER SERVING (12 SERVINGS): 596 CALS, 39.6G FAT

VEGETABLE SHORTENING

If you're looking to replace lard in a recipe, vegetable shortening is your best option. Like lard, it helps to break down the gluten masses that occur when flour is added to fat. It's commonly required in shortcrust pastry, shortbread and scones, and lends a flaky texture.
In the UK, they're sold under the brands Trex, Flora White or Cookeen. If you can't get hold of vegetable shortening, you can use unsalted butter, but it won't give you the same results.

COOK VEG LOVES



If you're wondering how to make your Christmas extra special, we love the Mulled Wine and Xmas Pudding natural flavourings from Foodie Flavours. Priced at £3.99 each, www.foodieflavours.com



BOOKSHELF

Recipes taken from Lizzie Kamenetzky's *Great British Bake Off: Christmas (£20, BBC Books). Photography by Laura Edwards.**

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

The Only Veggie MAINS YOU'LL NEED

Bored of cooking the same Christmas centrepiece each year? Allow us to introduce your new festive favourites...



SEND US A PIC OF YOUR CHRISTMAS MAIN – TWEET US @COOKVEG OR EMAIL YOURTIPS@COOKVEG.CO.UK – AND YOU COULD WIN A PRIZE!

The crowd-pleasing centrepiece

WINTER VEGETABLE TARTE TATIN

Serves 4-6
Ready in 1 hr

3 tbsp olive oil
6 shallots, peeled
1 large parsnip, cut into 4mm slices
200g Chantenay carrots, trimmed
6 Brussels sprouts, halved
1 tsp coriander seeds, lightly crushed
2 tsp pomegranate molasses
2 tbsp demerara sugar
1 tsp finely grated lemon rind
1 sheet ready-rolled puff pastry
fresh thyme leaves, to garnish

1 Set the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
2 Place the oil in a 20cm round cast iron frying pan. Oven heat for five minutes.
3 Add the pomegranate molasses and the coriander to the hot oil then add the shallots, parsnip slices and carrots. Toss the veg to coat and season well.
4 Bake for 10 minutes then add the sprouts and toss. Cook for five minutes.
5 Meanwhile, place the sugar in a saucepan with 3 tbsp water. Heat until bubbling. Remove from heat and add the lemon rind.
6 Pour the syrup over the veg. Unroll the pastry and place over the pan. Fold any over-hanging pastry back over the pan to create a thicker layer. Press down and up to edges of pan gently. Prick several times and return to the oven for 25-30 minutes.
7 Invert onto a serving plate and scatter with fresh thyme leaves.

PER SERVING (4 SERVINGS): 501 CALS, 34.1G FAT

Serve with...

For starters: ... serve a small slice of this tarte tatin with chunk of ripe Stilton and a smear of cranberry sauce.
For mains: ...opt for robust side dishes like roasted onions, honey-glazed parsnips, braised red cabbage, and add rosemary, sea salt and garlic cloves to your roasting potatoes.
For Boxing Day: ...keep it light but rich by serving this sticky tarte tatin with celeriac remoulade (bonus points for homemade mayonnaise – turn to p70).

FREE-FORM TARTS

Makes 6
Ready in 45 mins, plus chilling

For the Pastry
200g plain flour
130g butter, cubed and chilled
a pinch of salt

For the Leek and Cheddar Filling
1 tbsp olive oil
1 small leek, trimmed and sliced
1 garlic clove, peeled and finely chopped
50g Cheddar cheese, grated

For the Goat's Cheese and Cranberry Filling
75g goat's cheese with rind, sliced
3 tsp cranberry sauce

For the Butternut Squash and Rosemary Filling
2 tbsp olive oil
1/2 small red onion, peeled and sliced
150g butternut squash, peeled and cut into small cubes
beaten free-range egg, to glaze
fresh rosemary leaves, roughly chopped

1 Sift the flour into a bowl. Add the butter and use your fingertips to rub it into the flour until it resembles breadcrumbs. Stir in the salt.
2 Make a well in the centre and add 2 tbsp cold water. Bring the mixture together. Knead very briefly until smooth. Wrap in clingfilm and chill for at least 30 minutes.
3 Meanwhile, prepare the fillings. To make the Leek and Cheddar Filling: Heat the oil in a pan and add the leek. Cook, stirring regularly for two minutes until just soft. Set aside.
4 To make the Butternut Squash Filling: Heat the oil in a pan and add the onion. Cook for 1-2 minutes until just softened then add the butternut squash and 2 tbsp water. Cover and cook over a gentle heat for 6-8 minutes. Add the rosemary and season well. Set aside to cool.
5 Preheat the oven to 190C/375F/Gas 5 Once the pastry has been chilled, divide it into six even-sized pieces. On a lightly-floured surface, roll out the pasry balls to make rough circles approx 5mm thickness. Place on a large baking sheet.
6 Divide the leeks between twin of the pastry circles and top with the grated Cheddar. Divide the goat's cheese between two of the circles and then spoon over 'blobs' of cranberry sauce. Divide the butternut squash between two of the circles. Fold up the edges on each to cover some of the filling.
7 Brush the pastry with beaten egg. Cook for 15-20 minutes.

PER SERVING: 456 CALS, 32.7G FAT

Serve with...

For starters: ...a simply dressed watercress and toasted pine nut salad.
For mains: ...light side dishes, such as crisp and fluffy rapeseed oil-roasted potatoes, delicately spiced cabbage and onions, and buttery carrots.
For Boxing Day: ...make your own coleslaw and potato salad. Serve with crusty French bread and a selection of cheeses for your easiest ever family buffet.

The 'have-it-your-way' individual mains



FOR 180+ MORE FESTIVE RECIPES, VISIT WWW.COOKVEG.CO.UK/CHRISTMAS

5 SENSATIONAL

Christmas Bakes

Fill your home with the aroma of freshly baked goodies this Christmas with these delicious recipes from The Urban Bakery's **Dean Brettschneider**





"Kugelhopf is a classic from the Alsace region of France. It has a lovely fermented flavour due to the pre-ferment, which is combined with the creamed batter to make the final dough. It's very light in texture and the chocolate filling makes it extra special and great as an afternoon-tea cake. For this recipe you will need a 750g Kugelhopf mould (available from specialty cookware stores)"

CHOCOLATE KUGELHOPF

Makes 1 large kugelhopf
Ready in 4 hrs

For the Ferment
75g strong bread flour
7g instant dry yeast
good pinch of sugar
150ml milk, tepid

For the Dough
110g butter, softened
70g sugar
1 small free-range egg, plus
2 egg yolks
300g strong bread flour
5g salt
1 quantity of Ferment

For the Chocolate Filling
60g fresh cream
130g dark chocolate, finely chopped
icing sugar, for dusting

1 Make the ferment ahead and rest as required: Place flour, yeast and sugar in a bowl and stir to combine. Pour in milk and, using a wooden spoon, stir all ingredients to give a smooth, lump-free batter. Cover the bowl and leave in a warm place to ferment for 20 minutes until it becomes a frothy, spongy batter.
2 For the dough, put butter and sugar in a bowl and, using a wooden spoon, cream together until light and fluffy. Gradually add the egg and egg yolks, beating between each addition, until light and fluffy.
3 In a large bowl, place flour, salt, prepared ferment and creamed egg and sugar mixture. Mix with a wooden spoon until it forms a dough mass. Turn the dough out onto a lightly-floured work surface and knead for 15 minutes, resting it for one minute every 2-3 minutes, until it is smooth, elastic and a little sticky. The dough will seem very sticky at first, but it will firm up as you knead it. Don't be tempted to add excess flour.
4 Place the dough in a lightly oiled large bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Leave to ferment for one hour in a warm place (24-25C). Gently knock back the dough in the bowl by folding it back on itself; this will deflate it slightly, but it will develop more strength. Mould into a ball and place back in the lightly oiled bowl. Cover and rest for 30 minutes.
5 While the dough is resting, make the chocolate filling. Place cream in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and add chocolate. Using a wooden spoon, stir until chocolate has melted. Place in a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and set aside. Use the chocolate filling while it's still spreadable.
6 Lightly grease a Kugelhopf mould by brushing with melted butter. Tip dough out onto a lightly-floured work surface and flatten it into a rectangle. Using a rolling pin, roll dough to an even 45cmx25cm rectangle, 4-5mm thick. This will take some time: be patient, and allow the dough to relax for a few minutes if rolling becomes difficult.
7 Position the dough rectangle with the long edge facing you. Using a palette knife, spread the chocolate filling evenly over the dough rectangle, leaving a 1cm gap at the bottom edge. Lightly moisten this edge with water.
8 Starting at the top, roll the long edge downwards to form a Swissroll shape. Make the Kugelhopf roll a bit longer, to fit in the mould, by rolling it lightly on the work surface. Join the two ends of the roll together to form a ring shape. Place the dough ring seam-side up into the prepared Kugelhopf mould, then cover with plastic wrap and leave in a warm place for approximately 1½ hours, until almost doubled in size.
9 Place the mould on a tray in a preheated 190C/375F/Gas 5 oven and bake for 30-40 minutes. If the top surface is becoming too dark, place a sheet of greaseproof paper over the top during the final stages of baking. Allow to cool in the mould for 10 minutes before tipping out onto a wire rack. Leave to cool completely, then dust with icing sugar.

PER SERVING: 603 CALS, 31.3G FAT

SWEDISH CHRISTMAS RYE CRACKERS

Makes 10 large crackers
Ready in 1 hr 50 mins

300g strong bread flour
200g coarsely ground rye flour (stoneground is best)
10g salt
10g honey
15g instant dry yeast
100ml olive oil
2 tsp ground aniseed or ground fennel seeds
300ml water
30g sunflower seeds
30g pumpkin seeds
25g linseeds
25g sesame seeds
additional rye flour, for dusting

"Christmas in Italy would not be complete without this wonderful spiced, peppery candied fruit and nut confectionery. Panforte is great with a rich red wine or port, or enjoy it with an espresso at the end of a fantastic meal"

1 Place all the ingredients except the seeds in a bowl and, using a wooden spoon, combine to form a dough mass. Tip the dough out onto a lightly-floured work surface and knead for around 15 minutes, resting for 30 seconds every 2-3 minutes, until the dough is smooth and elastic. Add the seeds and knead. Place the dough in an oiled bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Leave in a warm place for 30 minutes.
2 Tip the dough onto a work surface lightly sprinkled with rye flour. Cut the dough into 10 equal pieces. Very gently mould each piece into a small, round ball shape. Leave the dough pieces on floured work surface, cover with plastic wrap and rest for five minutes. Line two baking trays with baking paper.
3 Flatten each ball with the palm of your hand. Using a rolling pin, roll out each dough piece to a 20cm-diameter circle. Use plenty of rye flour on top and bottom of dough pieces – this prevents dough from sticking to the work surface, and it gives a rustic look to the baked crackers. Using a 3cm round cutter, cut a hole in the middle of each disc. Reserve the cut-out holes and roll into another disc when finished. Using the end of a pencil or a chopstick, poke holes evenly over each disc. (Alternatively, roll dough out to a 3mm-thick rectangle, poke holes as described above, cut into squares or rectangles, then proceed as below.)
4 Place dough pieces on trays, cover with plastic wrap and leave in a warm place for 30 minutes, until the dough has risen and is a little puffy. Place both trays in a preheated 180C/350F/Gas 4 oven and bake for 30 minutes.
5 Reduce heat to 160C/325F/Gas 3 and bake for a further 15-20 minutes. The aim is to dry out the crackers; you can open the oven door a little to allow some of the moisture to escape. Remove trays from oven and place crackers on a wire rack to cool.

PER SERVING: 318 CALS, 15.2G FAT

DRESDEN CHRISTMAS STOLLEN

Makes 2 Stollen

Ready in 2 hrs, plus overnight soaking

For the Prepared Fruit
120g sultanas
120g currants or raisins
50ml rum
50g flaked almonds, lightly roasted in 170C/350F/Gas 4 oven until amber
50g mixed peel

For the Starter Dough
100ml milk, at room temperature
7g instant dry yeast
140g strong bread flour

For the Stollen Dough
1 quantity of Starter Dough
170g strong bread flour
2 good pinches of salt
35g sugar
1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
1/4 tsp ground cardamom
1 tsp pure vanilla extract with seeds
80ml milk
120g butter, softened, divided into 3 x 40g portions

For the Filling and Topping
200g good-quality marzipan, rolled into 2 x 20cm logs
150g unsalted butter
70g icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
150g caster sugar

1 Prepare the fruit a day in advance. Place sultanas, currants or raisins and rum in a bowl and toss to coat evenly. Cover with plastic wrap and leave in a warm place overnight.
2 The next day, add the almonds and mixed peel to the prepared fruit. Prepare the starter dough by placing all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and, using a wooden spoon, combining to form a dough mass. Tip the dough out onto work surface and knead for 10 minutes until the dough is smooth and silky. Place in a lightly-oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and leave to ferment in a warm place for 30 minutes.
3 Place the starter dough, flour, salt, sugar, spices, vanilla, milk and the first 40g portion of butter in a large mixing bowl. Using your hand, combine to form a dough mass. Tip the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead for approximately five minutes. Add the second 40g butter and continue to knead until it is well mixed in. Add the final 40g butter and knead until the dough is smooth and elastic. This will take a while, as the dough will be sticky to the touch at first. Over three additions, add the rum-soaked fruit, peel and almonds and continue to knead very gently until they are incorporated into the dough.
4 Lightly oil a bowl large enough for dough to double in bulk. Put dough in a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Leave in a warm place for 45 minutes.
5 Line a baking tray with baking paper. Tip the dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Divide into two equal pieces, approximately 500g each. Form each piece into an oblong approximately 22cmx20cm, and flatten it with the palm of your hand. Place one of the marzipan rolls slightly off-centre on each dough piece and fold over so marzipan is enclosed in dough. Using the handles of two wooden spoons, press dough firmly down on either side of the dough-covered marzipan sausage to create the typical Stollen shape (see photo). Place on the prepared baking tray, cover with plastic wrap and leave to rest for 15 minutes.
6 Bake the stollen in a preheated 180C/350F/Gas 4 oven for 40-45 minutes or until golden brown. Remove from oven and cool for 20 minutes on a wire rack. When Stollen are cool, make the topping. Place butter in a saucepan and melt over a low heat. Add icing sugar and whisk until smooth. Bring to the boil, then remove from heat.
7 Using a pastry brush, generously brush each Stollen with the melted butter and sugar mix to coat completely, then place on a wire rack to drain for one hour. Repeat the process three more times, resting for 2-3 minutes between each brushing to allow the butter and sugar mixture to soak in. Cover the stollen in a thick layer of caster sugar. Rest the stollen overnight in a covered container or on a tray covered with plastic wrap.
8 The next day, using a sieve, heavily dust the stollen with icing sugar. Wrap them in cellophane or plastic wrap and store for a minimum of four weeks before cutting and eating.

PER SERVING: 3,116 CALS, 143.8G FAT

PANFORTE

GF

Makes 1 x 20cm round cake
Ready in 2 hrs

GET AHEAD RECIPE!



DRESEDEN CHRISTMAS STOLLEN



PANFORTE



SWEDISH CHRISTMAS RYE CRACKERS

THOUGHTFUL XMAS GIFT



PANETTONE



115g hazelnuts, skinned
115g whole almonds, skinned
40g each: glacé pineapple, dried apricots, crystallised ginger and dried figs, cut into 5mm pieces
130g mixed (lemon and orange) peel, chopped
1 tsp ground Chinese five spice
1/2 tsp each: ground coriander, cloves, nutmeg
1/4 tsp white pepper
100g plain flour
150g sugar
125g honey
30g butter

1 To roast the hazelnuts and almonds, preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Place the nuts on an oven tray and roast for 10-15 minutes. Cool and then chop into pieces.
2 Lower the oven temperature to 170C/325F/Gas 3. Line the bottom and sides of a 20cm spring-form cake tin with baking paper. Mix the chopped nuts, fruits, peel, spices and flour.
3 Place the sugar, honey and butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and cook over a medium heat until the mixture reaches 116C/240F on a candy thermometer. Remove from the heat and pour the hot sugar syrup onto flour and nut mixture and stir using a wooden spoon. The mixture will become very stiff, so it's important to work quickly at this stage.
4 Place the mixture into prepared cake tin. Using your knuckles dipped in cold water, gently press the mixture evenly into the tin until level and smooth.
5 Place the tin immediately in the preheated oven and bake for 30-40 minutes. It won't seem very firm directly after baking, but will harden.
6 Cool the panforte in the tin until firm, then remove from the tin and peel off the baking paper.

PER SERVING: 467 CALS, 20.7G FAT

PANETTONE

V GF £+

Makes 2 large (15cm) panettone
Ready in 2 hrs, plus overnight fermenting

For the Sponge Dough Ferment

185g strong bread flour
2g instant dry yeast
115ml water, at body temperature

For the Soaked Fruit

180g sultanas or raisins
40g rum
100g mixed peel

For the Dough

500g strong bread flour
10g salt
115g sugar
5g instant dry yeast
zest of 2 lemons or oranges
1 quantity of Sponge Dough Ferment (from the day before)
1 1/2 tsp pure vanilla extract with seeds
1 1/2 tsp orange blossom water
140g free-range egg yolks (approx. 7 eggs)
120ml water
115g butter, softened
1 quantity of Soaked Fruit (from the day before)
100g butter, melted, for brushing on top of baked loaves

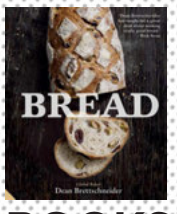
1 Begin the sponge dough ferment a day in advance. Mix all the ingredients in a bowl. Knead for approximately five minutes to form a dough. Place in a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and leave for a minimum of eight hours.
2 To prepare the fruit, place the sultanas or raisins in a bowl and add the rum. Cover and soak overnight. Add the mixed peel before using.
3 The next day, place the dry ingredients, zest, sponge dough ferment, vanilla and orange blossom water in a bowl and mix. Add the egg yolks and water. Using a wooden spoon, combine to form a dough.
4 Tip the dough out onto a lightly -floured work surface and knead for five minutes. The dough will be firm at this stage. Gradually add the softened butter over five additions, while still kneading. This process will take some time; the dough will be sticky at first. Knead for 10-15 minutes, resting the dough for one minute every 2-3 minutes. Add the soaked fruit and peel. Carefully knead into dough.
5 Place the dough in a lightly oiled large bowl, cover with plastic wrap and leave in a warm place for 45 minutes. Knock back the dough by folding it onto itself a few times. Cover and leave for a further 30 minutes.
6 Tip the dough out onto a floured surface and divide into two. Mould into large boules. Place them in two panettone moulds. Cover with plastic wrap. Leave to rise for 3-4 hours.
7 Cut a cross in the top of each panettone with a sharp knife. Place the loaves on a tray in a preheated 170C/350F/Gas 4 oven and bake for one hour, until the sides of the panettone feel firm. Remove from the oven and brush each loaf with the melted butter. Leave to cool.

PER SERVING: 2,865 CALS, 115.5G FAT

COOK VEG LOVES



Koko Dairy Free £1.39, available from all major supermarkets, can be used as a replacement for cow's milk in all your Christmas sauces and baking. It's made with freshly-pressed coconut milk, and has a light, fresh taste. Try it in seasonal recipes like bread sauce, brandy sauce, trifle



BOOKSHELF

Recipes taken from *Bread by Dean Brettschneider (£20.40, Jacqui Small LLP).**

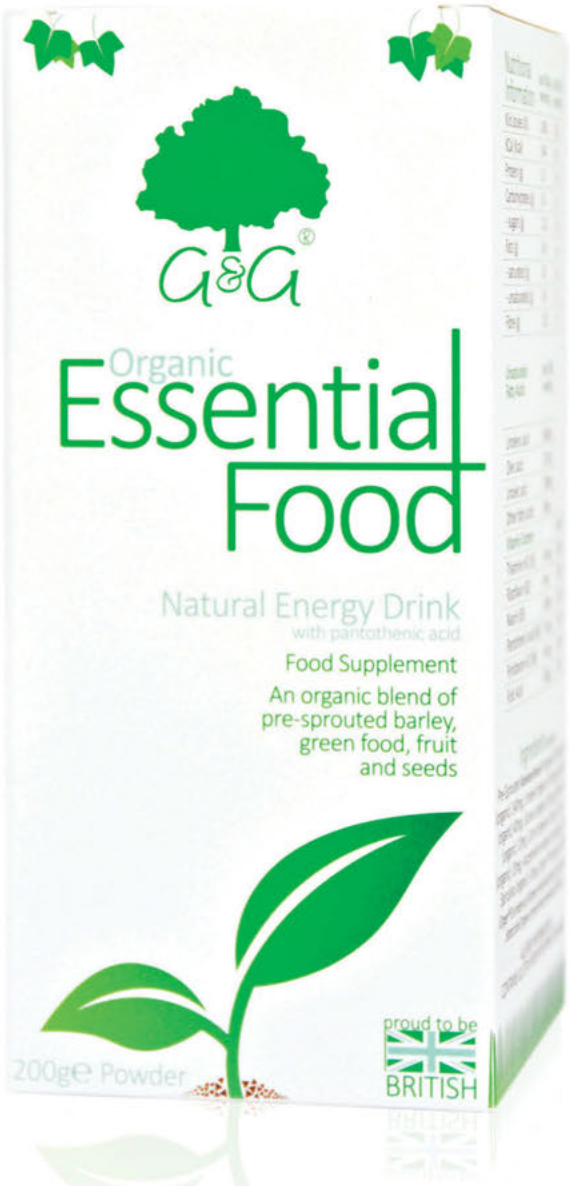
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Quick Festive Fixes

If time is not on your side this party season, these tempting dishes will satisfy in minutes, says **Sophie Wright**

When your arms are aching from late-night shopping and you still haven't sent your Christmas cards, the last thing you want to do is spend hours in the kitchen.

But that doesn't mean you have to deny yourself something delicious and home-cooked during the lead-up to the big day.

Plus, at this stressful time of year, taking half an hour to get creative is therapeutic and can help you feel more centred before you tackle the next thing on your to-do list. Here, Sophie serves up some snacks, salads and light dinners to get you through!



READY IN 10 MINS

ADUKI BEANS WITH PINEAPPLE, CHILLI AND HALLOUMI

Drain a 400g tin of black aduki beans and wash well. Add 150g of finely chopped pineapple, 1 large red chilli (seeds removed), 15g of chopped coriander and the juice and zest of 1 lime. Add tbsp of rapeseed oil. Coat 6 slices of halloumi cheese with a little oil and a pinch of chilli flakes. Griddle on a hot flat iron or frying pan for 30 seconds each side before serving with the bean salad.

READY IN 10 MINS

GOAT'S CHEESE WITH PICKLED CARROT RIBBONS, WALNUTS AND PUMPKIN SEEDS

Wash and peel 4 large carrots. With a swivel-head peeler, peel the carrots into ribbons. Segment 1 large orange by removing the peel and pith using a knife and removing the flesh. Add a squeeze of orange juice to the carrots along with 2 tbsp of cider vinegar and 2 tsp of honey. Mix well and season with salt and pepper. Leave the carrots to marinate for 30 minutes. Now drain the carrots and add the orange segments along with 50g of crushed walnuts and 3 tbsp of pumpkin seeds. Crumble over 150g of goat's cheese and serve.

READY IN 10 MINS

BOILED EGG, BEETROOT AND EDAMAME SALAD

Boil 4 free-range eggs in boiling water for 8 minutes. Drain and cool before peeling and cutting into quarters. Mix 150g of edamame beans with 15g of chopped mint. Quarter 4 cooked beetroots and mix with the edamame and mint. Add 2 tsp of Dijon mustard, 2 tsp of cider vinegar and 2 tbsp of rapeseed oil. Mix well, season and lay the eggs on top. Serve with rye bread.

READY IN 10 MINS

HAZELNUT AND BEETROOT DIP WITH CRUDITÉS

Combine 6 cooked beetroots with 100g of toasted hazelnuts, 1 tbsp of tahini paste, 1/2 tsp of Dijon mustard, 1 dtsp of red wine vinegar, 15g of fresh parsley, 2 tbsp of rapeseed oil and the zest of an orange. Blend until smooth.

THESE MEALS ALL SERVE TWO

Serve with baby sweetcorn, breakfast radishes, mangetout, sugar snaps and Tenderstem broccoli, none of which need chopping, but do give them a wash before serving.

READY IN 15 MINS

SOBA NOODLE, TOFU AND CHINESE GREENS BROTH WITH GINGER AND CHILLI

Make up 750ml of vegetable stock and place in a saucepan on the stove. Chop a little peeled ginger into thin strips, chop 2 garlic cloves and 1 small red chilli. Add this to the simmering broth. Now add the soba noodles and cook for 4 minutes. Add 1 tbsp of soya sauce. Cut up 100g of silken tofu into 2cm pieces and drop into the broth along with 2 handfuls of chopped Chinese greens. Simmer for a further 30 seconds before serving with a wedge of lime and fresh coriander.

READY IN 15 MINS

ORZO, BLACK OLIVE, FETA AND PEPPER WITH PARSLEY

Cut up 300g of butternut squash, with the skin on and place onto a baking tray. Add 1 tbsp of rapeseed oil, 1 tsp of ground cumin, 1 tsp of ground coriander, 1 tsp of smoked paprika and a pinch of chilli flakes. Bake at 190C/375F/Gas 5 for 25 minutes. Once cooked, place the squash in a bowl and add 400g tin of drained chickpeas and mash together. Roughly chop 15g of coriander, the juice of half a lemon, 1 tbsp of crème fraîche and 1 tbsp of sunflower seeds. Divide the mix between 2 wholemeal wraps and wrap tightly.

READY IN 20 MINS

RED QUINOA, TOMATO, ARTICHOKE AND PESTO SALAD

Take 200g of uncooked red quinoa and boil in salted water for 12 minutes until tender. Drain 50g of sun-blushed tomatoes and 100g of cooked and chargrilled artichoke hearts. Once the quinoa is cooked, chopped the tomatoes and artichokes roughly and add to the quinoa. Take 30g of fresh basil, 1 garlic clove, the juice and zest of a lemon, 40g of grated vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese and 50g of pine nuts and blend with any oil that you have left over from the tomatoes. Season the pesto and add to the quinoa.

READY IN 25 MINS

CELERIAC AND APPLE SOUP

Chop 1 leek, 1 onion, 1 celery stick and 2 garlic cloves along with 200g peeled celeriac, and 2 apples. Pour 2 tbsp of rapeseed oil into a saucepan and add all the ingredients. Cook for 3-4 minutes on a low heat with a generous pinch of salt and 1 tbsp of caraway seeds. Now add 1 litre of vegetable stock and simmer for 20 minutes. Once all the veg is tender, blend with a stick blender or allow to cool before liquidising. Add 1 tbsp of crème fraîche before reheating and serving.

READY IN 30 MINS

CHICKPEA AND ROASTED SQUASH WRAP

Cut up 300g of butternut squash, with the skin on and place onto a baking tray. Add 1 tbsp of rapeseed oil, 1 tsp of ground cumin, 1 tsp of ground coriander, 1 tsp of smoked paprika and a pinch of chilli flakes. Bake at 190C/375F/Gas 5 for 25 minutes. Once cooked, place the squash in a bowl and add 400g tin of drained chickpeas and mash together. Roughly chop 15g of coriander, the juice of half a lemon, 1 tbsp of crème fraîche and 1 tbsp of sunflower seeds. Divide the mix between 2 wholemeal wraps and wrap tightly.

READY IN 35 MINS

AVOCADO, KALE AND LENTIL SALAD WITH ROASTED TOMATOES

Place 12, halved cherry tomatoes on a baking sheet, sprinkle with dried oregano, salt, pepper and a drizzle of rapeseed oil and bake at 200C/400F/Gas 6 for 15 minutes. Cook 200g of Puy lentils in boiling water for 15 minutes until tender. Once cooked, drain well. Blanch 100g of kale in boiling salted water, refresh and add to the lentils. Peel an avocado and chop into chunks. Mix with the lentils and kale and the now cooked tomatoes. Make a dressing by combining 2 tsp of Dijon mustard with 3 tsp of red wine vinegar, 1 tsp of runny honey and 2 tbsp of rapeseed oil in a jar. Season and shake well with a lid on before pouring all over the warm salad.

For more info on Sophie Wright, visit www.sophiewright catering.co.uk



ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS Show-stoppers

Make an entrance with this year's festive bakes – they're dramatic, delicious and full of the wow factor

If you like your cakes grown-up and sophisticated, the following recipes from *Decorated* by April Carter (£20, Hardie Grant) will do quite nicely! They will take some dedication, but with the simple instructions you can achieve the decadent-looking finish without any fuss. So, if you really can't bring yourself to make another Christmas cake and want something more modern than a Yuletide log, we've selected three of the best desserts from the beautiful book that are just as festive and even more exciting. The Chestnut and Pear Cheesecake is covered in a chocolate glaze which can be used on other cakes, while the Gingerbread Cake with Whiskey will please those with a boozy palate. Don't be fooled by the Simple Store Cupboard Chocolate Cake's name as there's nothing dull about this devilish bake. Get ready to loosen your belts!

GINGERBREAD CAKE WITH WHISKEY CARAMEL

Serves 10-12
Ready in 1 hr 10 mins

For the cake
225g unsalted butter
110g black treacle
110g golden syrup
225g soft dark brown sugar
2 medium free-range eggs
300ml whole milk
350g plain flour
2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
4 tsp ground ginger
3 tsp ground cinnamon
1 pinch each of ground cloves, nutmeg and salt

For the Whiskey Caramel Sauce
250g caster sugar
300ml double cream
50g unsalted butter
3-4 tsp whiskey
1-2 tsp flaky sea salt

For the Whiskey Caramel Buttercream:
300g unsalted butter
500g icing sugar
150ml whiskey caramel sauce

To decorate
crystallised ginger, thinly sliced

1 Preheat the oven to 170C/335F/Gas 3. Grease two 18cm round cake tins and line the bases with baking parchment. Heat the butter, treacle and golden syrup in a saucepan over a low heat until the butter has melted.
2 Beat in the sugar and set aside. Mix the eggs and milk together in a bowl to combine, then slowly beat into the butter and sugar mixture. Sift the flour, bicarbonate of soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and salt into the saucepan and beat until combined.
3 Divide the mixture evenly between the prepared cake tins. Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes, or until a skewer inserted into the centre of each cake comes out clean. Allow the cakes to cool for 10 minutes in their tins, then turn them out on to a wire rack and leave to cool.
4 To make the whiskey caramel sauce, heat the sugar in a large saucepan over a medium heat. Once the sugar starts to melt, swirl the sugar into the liquid areas of the pan without stirring. Meanwhile, gently warm the cream and butter in a separate pan until the butter has melted. After about 10 minutes, remove the saucepan from the heat. Immediately whisk in the warm cream and butter mixture. If the sugar solidifies, return the pan to a medium heat until the mixture is liquid again. Stir in the salt and the whiskey. Pour the mixture through a sieve into a heatproof bowl, to remove any lumps of sugar, and leave to cool.
5 To make the buttercream, using a stand mixer, beat the butter in a bowl for 3-4 minutes until pale and creamy. Add the icing sugar and whiskey caramel sauce and continue to beat for another 2-3 minutes until smooth.
6 Level the cakes by cutting off the



GINGERBREAD CAKE WITH WHISKEY CARAMEL





domed tops and split each cake in half so that you have four layers in total. Fix the bottom layer of the cake to a board or stand with a small amount of buttercream. Spread the first layer with the whiskey caramel buttercream.
7 Place the second layer on top of this and repeat, then repeat again with the third layer, finishing with the final cake layer. Cover the cake with a thin layer of buttercream and chill for 30 minutes or until firm. Cover with the remaining buttercream, chill for a further 10 minutes and pour over the rest of the whiskey caramel. Top with the crystallised ginger.

PER SERVING: XXX CALS, XXX G FAT

CHESTNUT & PEAR CHEESECAKE

Serves 8-10
Ready in 50 mins, plus overnight chilling

For the poached pears
7 small, firm pears
500g caster sugar

For the base
180g digestive biscuits
90g unsalted butter
2 tbsp cocoa powder

For the filling
100g dark chocolate, finely chopped
250g cream cheese
150g sugar
450ml double cream
150g chestnut spread

For the chocolate glaze
100g dark chocolate, finely chopped
50g unsalted butter

1 To poach the pears, peel, leaving the stalks intact, then slice off the bottoms and hollow out to remove the core and seeds. Pour the sugar and one litre of cold water into a large saucepan and heat gently to dissolve the sugar, stirring occasionally. Add the pears to the saucepan and place some baking parchment onto the surface of the syrup and a lid on the pan. Simmer for 15 minutes. Leave the pears in the syrup and set aside to cool.
2 To make the base, line a 20cm round, deep cake tin with clingfilm. Place the digestive biscuits in a plastic bag and crush into crumbs. Melt the butter in a saucepan and stir in the crushed biscuits and cocoa powder. Press the biscuit mixture into the bottom of the tin, making the base slightly higher at the sides. Chill for 20 minutes.


THE CROWD PLEASER
CHESTNUT AND PEAR CHEESECAKE



SIMPLE STORE CUPBOARD CHOCOLATE CAKE

Serves 10-12
Ready in 1 hr 20 mins

For the chocolate cake
110g cocoa powder
1½ tsp vanilla extract
260g unsalted butter
225g caster sugar
225g brown sugar
6 medium free-range eggs, lightly beaten
420g plain flour
4 tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
270ml whole milk

For the chocolate buttercream
375g unsalted butter
520g icing sugar
120g cocoa powder
150ml double cream

To decorate
sparklers, candles, sprinkles or chocolate curls

You'll also need:
2 x 18 cm round, deep cake tins, cake board or stand

1 Preheat the oven to 160C/325F/Gas 3. Grease the two 18cm round cake tins and line the bases with baking parchment. Place the cocoa powder, vanilla extract and 180ml boiling water in a bowl and whisk. In a bowl, using a stand mixer or electric hand mixer, beat the butter and sugars. Add the beaten eggs to the butter mixture a little at a time, beating after each addition until they're well incorporated. Add the cooled cocoa mixture.
2 Sift the flour, baking powder and salt into a clean bowl. Add a third of the flour mixture to the butter mixture and beat until just combined. Add half of the milk, continuing to beat and scraping down the sides of the bowl. Add another third of the flour, the remaining milk and the remaining flour and beat until just combined.
3 Divide the mixture evenly between the prepared cake tins. Bake in the oven for 50-60 minutes. Allow the cakes to cool for 10 minutes in their tins, then turn them out onto a wire rack and leave to cool completely.
4 While the cakes are cooling, make the chocolate buttercream. Using a stand mixer or electric hand mixer, beat the butter in a bowl for 3-4 minutes until pale and creamy. Add the remaining ingredients and continue to beat for another until smooth.
5 Level the cakes by cutting off the domed tops and split each layer in half so that you have four layers in total. Fix the bottom layer of the cake to a cake board or stand. Spread the first layer with a generous amount of the chocolate buttercream. Place the second layer on top of this and repeat, and repeat again with the third layer, finishing with the final cake layer. Cover the cake with a thin layer of

3 Meanwhile, make the filling. Melt the chocolate by placing it in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water. Stir the chocolate until it is melted. Remove the bowl from the saucepan and continue to stir until the chocolate is completely melted.
4 Beat the sugar and cream cheese together. In a bowl, whisk the double cream until it forms soft peaks and fold into the cream cheese mixture. Split the cream cheese mixture into two bowls and fold the chocolate into one, and the chestnut spread into the other.
5 To assemble, spread the chocolate filling over the chilled base.
6 Plunge the poached pears into the chocolate filling and chill for 20 minutes. Spread the chestnut filling over the top of the chocolate filling and chill again for at least two hours.
7 Just before serving, make the chocolate glaze. Melt the chocolate and butter in a heatproof bowl over a saucepan of simmering water as before. Set aside to cool slightly. Remove the cheesecake from the cake tin and set on a serving plate. Pour over the chocolate glaze and serve.
PER SERVING: XXX CALS, XXX G FAT

BOOKSHELF



Recipes taken from *Decorated* by April Carter (£20, Hardie Grant).

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

Try going Dairy Free this Xmas

Koko Dairy Free Original tastes remarkably similar to semi-skimmed cow's milk, yet it's totally free of dairy, soya, and animal fats.

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COMFORT &joy

Is there anything better than a piping hot bowl of soup after a day of getting battered by the winter elements? These delicious broths from **James Martin** are sure to warm your cockles



"San Marzano are the best canned tomatoes I know; they are sweet and have fewer seeds. I use them for pizza sauce, too. You will find them in the supermarket if you read the label. And making your own butter is nothing new... well, not to me anyway. Roasting the garlic softens it and turns this into the best garlic bread"

BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP WITH FLOWERPOT BREAD

Serves 4
Ready in 45 mins, plus 1 hr 30 mins proofing

450g packet ready-made pain de campagne bread mix
25g unsalted butter, plus more for the flowerpots
1 tbsp olive oil
1/2 onion, thinly sliced
450g butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1cm pieces
500ml vegetable stock
375ml milk
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
finely grated zest and juice of 2 limes

1 Make the bread dough according to the packet instructions, then leave to prove in a large bowl in a warm place for one hour, or until doubled in size. Meanwhile, clean four small clay flowerpots, butter them and line with twists or strips of double-sided silicone kitchen paper.
2 Take the dough out and knock it back, then divide into four and place into the flowerpots. Leave to prove again for 30 minutes.
3 Preheat the oven to 220C/425F/Gas 7. Place the flowerpots on a baking tray in the oven and bake for 10-15 minutes until golden brown and cooked through.
4 Meanwhile, heat the remaining butter and olive oil in a large saucepan or sauté pan, add the onion, cover and cook without colour for three or four minutes. Add the butternut squash and sauté for two or three minutes, then add all the remaining ingredients except the lime zest and juice. Bring to the boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer and cook for six minutes, or until the butternut squash is cooked.
5 Pour into a blender, making sure to fill it only one-third full, cover with the lid and blitz to a purée. (You will probably have to blend the soup in batches.) You'll know your blender better than I do, but you need to make sure the centre part of the lid is slightly ajar, or it can create a vacuum which can pop the lid off and spray hot soup around the kitchen. Be careful.
6 Return the soup to the saucepan to heat through, then adjust the seasoning and finish with the lime zest and juice. Serve the soup with the flowerpot bread alongside.

PER SERVING: 450 CALS, 12.2G FAT



QUICK TOMATO AND BASIL SOUP WITH ROASTED GARLIC BREAD

Serves 2-4
Ready in 1 hr 20 mins

1 garlic bulb
500ml double cream
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
leaves from a large bunch of basil, roughly chopped, 2 sprigs reserved
75ml extra virgin olive oil
1/2 banana shallot, finely chopped
2 x 400g cans of San Marzano tomatoes
1 small baguette, halved lengthways, then halved widthways

1 Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Wrap the whole garlic bulb in foil then place on a baking tray and roast for 40-45 minutes until soft. Set aside until cool enough to handle, then cut the top off of the bulb, squeeze out all the soft garlic and finely chop it.



"Butternut squash is packed full of flavour and the soup takes little time to make. The bread comes from a ready mix my mum uses and the idea of baking it in flowerpots makes a fun way of presenting rolls. I love these as they look great on the table"

2 Pour the double cream into the bowl of a food mixer and beat for three to five minutes until the mixture turns into solid lumps with a liquid base. You have made butter!

3 Tip out into a muslin or cloth-lined colander over a large bowl, wrap the muslin tightly around it and squeeze out all the liquid so that you have a solid mass of butter in the muslin, then discard the liquid.

4 Return the butter to the bowl, add the roast garlic and a generous pinch of salt, then stir in one-third of the chopped basil and mix once more.

5 Heat a large sauté pan until hot, add all but 2 tbsp of the extra virgin olive oil and the shallot and cook without colouring for one minute. Add the canned tomatoes and the remaining basil (except the two reserved sprigs), then simmer for two or three minutes.

6 Meanwhile, heat a griddle pan until very hot and char the bread on both sides. Slather with the garlic butter and keep warm in a low oven.

7 Blitz the soup with a stick blender – or place in a blender and blitz – to a fine purée. If using a blender, make sure to fill it only one-third full. (You will probably have to blend the soup in batches.) Season with salt and pepper. You'll know your blender better than I do, but you need to make sure the centre part of the lid is slightly ajar, or it can create a vacuum which can pop the lid off and spray hot soup around the kitchen. Be careful.

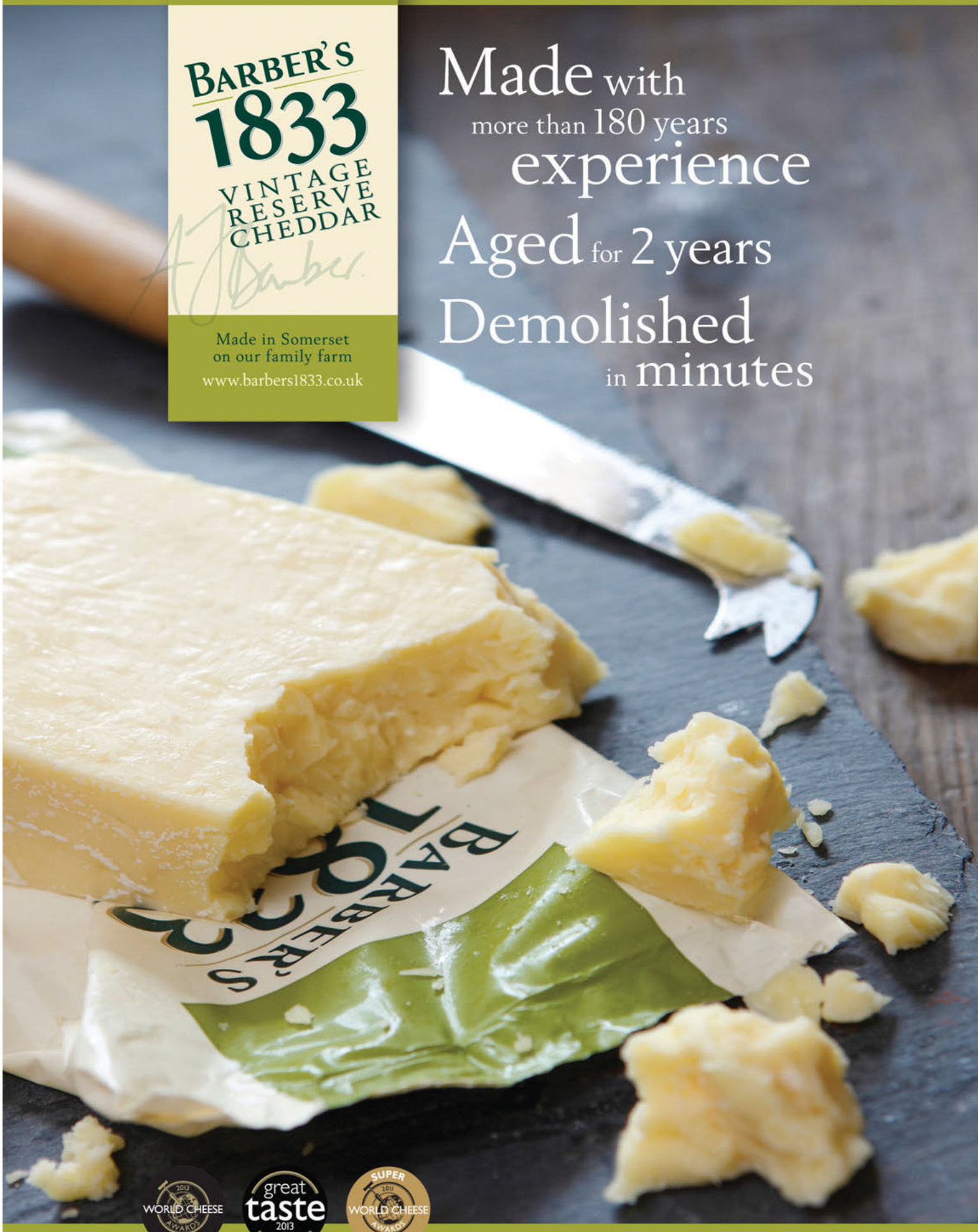
8 Serve the soup in bowls with some of the reserved olive oil drizzled over the top and a scattering of shredded basil leaves from the reserved sprigs, with the garlic bread alongside.

PER SERVING (4 SERVINGS, NO BAGUETTE): 747 CALS, 76.1G FAT

BOOKSHELF

Recipes taken from James Martin's *Home Comforts (£20, Quadrille). Photography by Yuki Sugiura. The new series of *James Martin: Home Comforts* returns to BBC Two in January.**

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT


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FOR COCKTAIL IDEAS TO SERVE ALONGSIDE THESE SNACKS TURN TO PAGE 38

Merry little bites

With the drinks and conversation flowing, all your get-together needs now is some sophisticated nibbles to match. These party snacks with a Mediterranean twist will have your guests fighting over every morsel



BOOKSHELF

Recipes taken from *Little Italy by Nicole Herft (Hardie Grant, £12.99) Photography by Jacqui Melville**

COURGETTE FRITTI WITH SMOKED GARLIC AÏOLI

Serves 4
Ready in 20 mins

2 large courgettes
200g '00' flour
100ml olive oil
2 free-range egg whites
vegetable oil, to shallow-fry

For the Smoked Garlic Aïoli
3 small smoked garlic cloves, crushed
1 tsp smoked paprika,
2 free-range egg yolks
juice of 1 lemon
sea salt and ground black pepper
100ml mild-flavoured olive oil

1 Prepare the courgette by slicing it on an angle, ½ cm thick. Lay down these slices and cut again into thick matchsticks.
2 To make the batter, put the flour in a large bowl, make a well in the centre and whisk in the oil and a tablespoon of warm water. Gradually add more water if necessary to create a batter that's the consistency of double cream. Place the egg whites into a clean bowl.
3 For the aïoli, put the garlic, paprika, egg yolks and a good squeeze of lemon juice in a bowl. Season and whisk until combined, then slowly drizzle in the olive a little at a time, whisking constantly, until it has all been incorporated. Taste and add a little more lemon juice or smoked paprika according to what you like. Also, if the aïoli becomes too thick, whisk in a little warm water to loosen it slightly.
4 Heat the vegetable oil until it measures 180C/350F on an oil thermometer. Whisk the egg whites to stiff peaks and fold gently through the batter. Dip handfuls of courgette into the batter and fry in batches in the hot oil until golden and crispy. Drain on paper towels and keep warm while you cook the rest. Serve hot, poked upright into 12 little pots, sprinkled with sea salt, with the aïoli alongside.

PER SERVING: 744 CALS, 43.7 G FAT

PUMPKIN, SAGE AND TALEGGIO ARANCINI

Makes 30 balls
Ready in 30 mins, plus chilling

2 tbsp olive oil
250g pumpkin or butternut squash, finely chopped
sea salt and ground black pepper
1 1/2 tbsp unsalted butter
1 onion, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
250g Arborio rice
1 lt hot vegetable stock
40g vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese
2 tbsp sage leaves, plus extra to serve
200g Taleggio
vegetable oil to deep-fry

For the coating
150g plain flour
2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten
250g white breadcrumbs

1 Heat half of the olive oil in a non-stick frying pan over a high heat. Add the pumpkin, season with salt and pepper and cook for 10 minutes.
2 Heat the remaining oil and the butter in a large saucepan, add the onion and cook until softened. Add the garlic and cook for two minutes, then tip in the rice and stir well to coat each grain.

"These gorgeous rice balls originate from Sicily. Pumpkin and sage are one of my favourite taste combinations"

Increase the heat and add a ladle of stock, stirring until all the liquid is absorbed. Repeat until all the stock has been used and the rice is creamy and cooked al dente. Remove from the heat and stir through the pumpkin, vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese and sage. Season to taste and allow the mixture to cool. Cover and refrigerate to chill.
3 When the mixture has cooled, divide it into 30 balls and flatten. Cut the Taleggio into 1cm cubes and place it in the centre of the flattened ball, then mould the rice around it to form a round ball again. Put the flour, eggs and breadcrumbs in separate bowls. Roll each ball in flour, dip in egg, then coat in breadcrumbs.
4 Heat up the vegetable oil to 180C/350F. Deep-fry the arancini in batches for 4-5 minutes or until golden brown. Drain on paper towels. Take a handful of sage leaves and fry them in the hot oil for around 30 seconds. Take care as you do so, because they will splatter. Remove them from the oil and drain well. Sprinkle the arancini with sea salt and the deep-fried sage leaves. Serve with a tomato sauce for dipping.

PER BALL: 139 CALS, 7.5 G FAT

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

SHAKEN, BUT *never stirred*



Mauro Frisulli, cocktail afficionado for the exclusive London club Home House, shows us how to make the most fashionable tipples for our Christmas parties



2015'S HOTTEST COCKTAILS

"Freshly squeezed [lemon or lime] juice greatly improves the quality of the drink"

Cocktails are back in vogue! So, if you're hosting a party this Christmas season, try our fashionable and easy cocktails below...

GREAT SCOTT

50ml Buffalo Trace bourbon whiskey
15ml Amaretto Disaronno
3 drops Angostura Bitters
0.5g dry chamomile
1 orange zest

Mix all the ingredients in a decanter and add dry smoke camomile using a smoking gun. Dry shake (ie shake in a cocktail shaker without the ice), then pour the liquid over cubed ice in an Old Fashioned glass and stir well. Use an orange twist and maraschino cherry as a garnish. We serve this drink in a wooden box to contain the drink.

BLACK BISON

40ml Cariel Vanilla vodka
20ml Crème de Mure liqueur
3 fresh blackberries
10ml fresh lime juice
fresh apple juice
crushed ice

Muddle three blackberries with vanilla sugar in a high ball glass, build all the ingredients over crushed ice and stir well. Use blackberries as a garnish.

STRAWBERRY FIELDS

15ml Cariel Vanilla Vodka
10ml strawberry purée
10ml strawberry cordial
90ml Moet & Chandon Champagne

Pour all the ingredients apart from the Champagne in a shaker and shake well, fine strain in a flute, then top up with Champagne.

ESPRESSO MARTINI

50ml Ketel One vodka
25ml Kahlua coffee liqueur
25ml single espresso

Pour all the ingredients in a shaker, shake well, and then double-strain in a martini glass. Use three coffee beans as a garnish.

MAURO'S INSIDER TIPS FOR SUPERIOR COCKTAILS

1 Just as you'd expect your favourite dish to be served on a warm plate, always serve your cocktails in a chilled glass to enhance their flavour; to make crushed ice, fill a clean tea towel with ice and crush it with a muddler.
2 When building your cocktail, first add the spirits, followed by the liqueurs, and then the mixers, as this will allow you to adapt the ratio and strength of the drink more easily.
3 Lemon or lime juice and sugar act as the main modifiers, so the get the balance right; freshly squeezed juice greatly improves the drink's quality.

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MEAT-FREE Family Feast

TV chef **Gino D'Acampo** serves up the dishes that he uses to get his brood round the table



Family cooking should be big, bold but above all, easy, which is why when we're looking for recipes for our kinfolk, we turn to the Italians for inspiration. Whether they're the desserts that everyone licks their plates clean for, or the big al forno winter warmers that you can pop in the oven and forget about, Italian food is made for sharing with the people you love. Here, Gino dishes up a few of his recipes that will have everyone at the table in time to eat...



Tortiglioni alla Parmigiana

BAKED PASTA WITH AUBERGINES, RED ONIONS AND VEGGIE HARD CHEESE

Serves 6
Ready in 40 mins

150ml olive oil
2 large aubergines, cut into strips 1cm wide
salt and black pepper, to taste
2 large red onions, peeled and finely sliced
3 x 400g tins chopped tomatoes
15 fresh basil leaves
500g dried tortiglioni
80g vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese

"Aubergines are fantastic fruits (no, I'm not going crazy – it's like the tomato) that offer so much taste. You can add a few chilli flakes to the sauce if you like an extra kick."

1 Heat the olive oil in a large frying pan, add the aubergines and fry for eight minutes until golden brown, stirring occasionally. Using a slotted spoon, remove the aubergines from the pan and drain on kitchen paper. Sprinkle with a little salt.
2 Using the same pan, fry the onions for eight minutes, stirring occasionally. Add in the tomatoes with the basil, stir everything together and simmer on a medium heat for 15 minutes. Stir occasionally. Stir in the aubergines and continue to cook for a further two minutes. Season with salt and pepper and set aside.
3 Meanwhile, cook the pasta in a large saucepan of salted boiling water until al dente. Stir occasionally to prevent it sticking. For the perfect al dente bite, cook the pasta one minute less than instructed on the packet. Drain and tip back into the saucepan. Set the pan over a low heat, pour over the aubergine sauce and half of the vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese. Stir everything together for 30 seconds, allowing all the flavours to combine.
4 Heat the grill to high. Transfer the pasta and sauce to a large ovenproof dish and sprinkle the top with the remaining vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese. Place under the grill for 10 minutes until the top gets bubbly and crispy. Remove and leave to rest for five minutes before cutting into portions. Buon appetito!

PER SERVING: 514 CALS, 31.3 G FAT



"This recipe gets my heart racing – all my favourite things in one mouthful!"

Gelato Al Cioccolato Con Uvetta E Gocce Di Cioccolato

CHOCOLATE ICE CREAM WITH RAISINS AND CHOCOLATE CHIPS

Serves 4
Ready in 25 mins, plus 3 hrs freezing

50g raisins
3 tbsp Cognac
4 large free-range egg yolks
100g caster sugar
350ml full-fat milk
250ml double cream
200g dark chocolate
50g dark chocolate chips

1 Place the raisins in a small bowl and pour over the Cognac. Leave the raisins to soak while you prepare the rest of the ingredients.
2 In a large bowl, beat together the egg yolks and sugar for about five minutes until thick, pale and creamy. Set aside.
3 In a medium saucepan, gently heat the milk and cream, stirring occasionally to prevent a skin forming. Take off the heat just before it starts to boil. Pour the milk mixture into the eggs very slowly, beating continuously. Return to the saucepan over a gentle heat and cook, stirring, for 15 minutes. Remove from the heat, pour into a bowl and leave to cool.
4 Break the dark chocolate into a small bowl and melt in the microwave in short bursts, stirring in between, or melt it in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of simmering water – do not let the base of the bowl touch the water. Add the melted chocolate to the milk and cream mixture and mix to combine.
5 Pour the chocolate mixture into a freezerproof shallow dish and place in the freezer for two hours. Remove from the freezer and add in the chocolate chips with the raisins and soaking Cognac. Gently mix through with a fork. Return to the freezer and take out after 20 minutes to fork through again. Repeat the same process three times. Enjoy!

PER SERVING: 879 CALS, 58.9 G FAT

"We love our pasta in Italy – so much so that we like to eat it for dessert too! These little half-moon-shaped pasta treats are perfect eaten at the end of a meal or with coffee"



Mezzalune Dolci Ripiene Di Ricotta Con Cioccolato, Arancia E Nocciole

SWEET PASTA FILLED WITH RICOTTA, HAZELNUTS, ORANGE AND CHOCOLATE

Serves 4
Ready in 40 mins

For the pasta
2 large free-range eggs, plus 1 free-range egg yolk
250g '00' flour, plus a little for dusting
2 tbsp caster sugar
50g butter, softened
olive oil, for frying

For the filling
250g ricotta cheese
1 orange, zest
50g hazelnuts, finely chopped
50g good-quality dark chocolate chips
1 tbsp caster sugar
1 free-range egg, beaten
4 tbsp honey, for drizzling
4 tbsp icing sugar, for dusting

1 Beat together the eggs and egg yolk. Place the flour in a large bowl and add the sugar and butter, then add the eggs. With the end of a wooden spoon, bring the mix together, adding a drop of water if you need to. Once the mixture starts to come together, turn it out onto a clean work surface and start to knead the dough until the surface is clean and the dough smooth. Wrap in cling film and leave to rest for 20-30 minutes.
2 Meanwhile, combine the ricotta, orange zest, hazelnuts and chocolate chips, adding a tablespoon of sugar, if you like. Set aside.
3 Unwrap the chilled pasta dough onto a well-floured surface. Flatten it down slightly with your fingertips then roll it out until it is 2mm thick, or use a pasta machine. Once thin, cut out 12 discs of pasta using a 10-12cm cutter. Brush around the edge of each disc with a little egg wash, then place a spoonful of the ricotta filling in the middle of each disc and fold the one half of the pasta circle over the filling, creating a half-moon shape. Press down firmly around the edge, then use a fork to press the edges together.
4 Heat 5cm oil in a saucepan. To check if the oil is hot, add a little offcut of pasta to the oil – if bubbles start to appear around it and it floats to the top, it is ready. Fry the half-moons in batches.
5 Cook for 1½ minutes then carefully turn them over and cook for 1½ minutes on the other side.
6 Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. Serve immediately drizzled with honey and dusted with icing sugar.

PER SERVING: 794 CALS, 38.1 G FAT

Taste the goodness

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6 Royal Doulton Stainless Steel 'Pop in for Drinks' Ice Bucket £57.83, www.sizzle.co.uk
7 Tray Table £35, Habitat





IN DEFENCE OF...

Brussels Sprouts

In the first of a new series, we put the case forward for an unloved ingredient. This month, TV chef Lesley Waters fights the case for the mini cabbage



I love Brussels sprouts, and these mini hits of goodness are the most useful vegetable to use during the winter months. So why, oh why, is it just at Christmas time that everyone has them on their shopping lists?

The humble Brussels sprout is sweet, nutty and really versatile. They belong to the brassica family, so the same as broccoli and kale to name a few.

They're best bought when still small and tight and if you can buy them on their stalks they stay sweeter and fresher for longer. To be honest, if the sprouts are small you really need to do very little – or no preparation – except a good wash; slightly bigger ones barely need trimming. Don't bother crossing the base as this is a waste of time, and makes them go soggy and lose their shape. Sadly, at times, they are cooked to death in salted water which makes them squidgy and take on an unpleasantly strong flavour. If you want to boil them, just plunge them into lightly boiling salted water, bring back to the boil as fast as possible and cook without a lid for approx 8-10 minutes. Drain them really well and return to the pan with a knob of butter and season, and – if I'm feeling daring– lightly crushed juniper berries or cardamom seeds and garlic through the butter gives them a fab kick.

But to make the most of this under-rated veg, the secret is not always to boil them. By using other methods of cooking you will get the wonderful taste and many more precious nutrients.

They are delicious shredded and stir-fried with rapeseed oil or butter, chilli, ginger and soy sauce. They are also lovely roasted whole or halved with olive oil and quartered Cox's apples, red onions and finished with pine nuts and crumbled Stilton. Try them tossed in melted butter, bay, nutmeg, a twist of black pepper and a squeeze of orange, steamed in a parchment bag tied with string. Small sprouts will take about 20-25 minutes in a hot oven.

Leftover Brussels can be cooked gratin-style, baked with a creamy mustard and cheese sauce and finished with toasted flaked almonds and buttered fried crumbs. Or transform the traditional bubble and squeak or colcannon when served with spicy coconut gravy and a soft poached egg.

At the end of the day, they are wonderful with chestnuts but that's only the tip of the iceberg... Don't push them to the side of your plate, they deserve so much more.

The Sprout Hater's Recipes

CREAMED BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH NUTMEG

Serves 4
Ready in 15 mins

450g fresh sprouts, outer leaves and ends of stalks removed
30g butter
100ml double cream
1 tsp grated nutmeg
small bunch fresh parsley, roughly chopped
black pepper

1 In a pan of boiling water, simmer the Brussels sprouts for 8-10 minutes until just done. Drain then tip into a food processor.
2 Add the butter, cream, nutmeg and ¾ of the parsley and season to taste. Whiz until semi-smooth so it still has some texture.
3 Check the seasoning then spoon into a warm serving dish and scatter with the remaining parsley and a good grind of black pepper.

PER SERVING: 213 CALS, 33.6G FAT

BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND POTATO CROQUETTES

Serves 4
Ready in 30 mins, plus chilling time

200g Brussels sprouts, trimmed and sliced
500g potatoes cooked and crushed
1 free-range egg, beaten
50g plain flour
100g finely ground and seasoned breadcrumbs
300ml vegetable oil
200g tin chopped tomatoes
small bunch of coriander, chopped
1 tsp vegetarian Worcestershire sauce
1 shallot, finely sliced

1 Drop the sprouts into boiling water and blanch for 2-3 minutes. Drain and refresh with cold water. Combine with the potato, mashing them together with a fork. Season well and form the mixture into 12 croquettes.
2 Place the egg in a bowl, the flour on a plate and the breadcrumbs on a second plate. Dip each croquette into the flour first, to coat, then the egg and lastly the breadcrumbs. Make sure each is fully covered. Chill in the fridge for 30 minutes, or up to 24 hours.
3 To make the dip combine the tomatoes, coriander, Worcester sauce and shallot, season and set aside.
4 Pour the oil into a large, deep frying pan, to a depth of about 4cm, and place over a medium-high heat. Fry the croquettes until golden all over for a total of five minutes – you may need to do this in two batches to avoid overcrowding the pan. Drain on kitchen paper and serve immediately with the tomato dip.

PER SERVING: 408 CALS, 20.5G FAT

CRUNCHY SPROUT SALAD WITH PUMPKIN SEEDS AND BALSAMIC

Serves 4-6
Ready in 10 mins

450g Brussels sprouts
3 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
zest of 1 lemon
50g pumpkin seeds

1 Finely shred the sprouts using a grater, knife or mandolin.
2 In a small bowl, combine the oil, balsamic and lemon zest and season to taste.
3 In a frying pan, toast the pumpkin seeds until browned. In a serving bowl combine the shredded sprouts with the dressing and half the seeds mixing well then scatter over the remaining seeds.

PER SERVING: 121 CALS, 11.5G FAT

Also in season this month...

apples, beetroot, cauliflower, celeriac, celery, chestnuts, chicory, cranberries, Jerusalem artichokes, kale, leeks, parsnips, pears, pomegranate, potatoes, pumpkin, quince red cabbage, swede, turnips, walnuts.


CREAMED BRUSSELS SPROUTS WITH NUTMEG


BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND POTATO CROQUETTES


CRUNCHY SPROUT SALAD WITH PUMPKIN SEEDS AND BALSAMIC

THE BUFFET'S BACK!

Christmas means friends and family dropping by and parties, and it's when the buffet becomes the tastiest and most practical way to serve food. Here are our top buys...



M&S Profierole Tower, £8

Selection of Vbites foods: Breaded Pepperjack Cheezly Bites, £2.69; Meat-free Kofta Bites, £2.69; Meat-free Mini Burger Bites, £2.69; Meat-free Mini Pork Sausages, £2.79, www.vbitesfoods.com

Tesco Spicy Pimento Stuffed Olives, £2

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Waitrose 12 Mini Pastry Crowns, £2.25







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COOK YOUR BEST EVER COMFORT FOOD

Jamie Oliver serves us some sensational soul food, taken from his latest book to get you through the colder months



BUTTER & SAGE GNUDI

Serves 6-8
Ready in 45 mins, plus chilling

Gnudi
1kg best-quality ricotta
100g vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese
1 whole nutmeg, for grating
fine semolina, for dusting

To Serve
good-quality unsalted butter
1 bunch of fresh sage (30g)
vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese
1 lemon

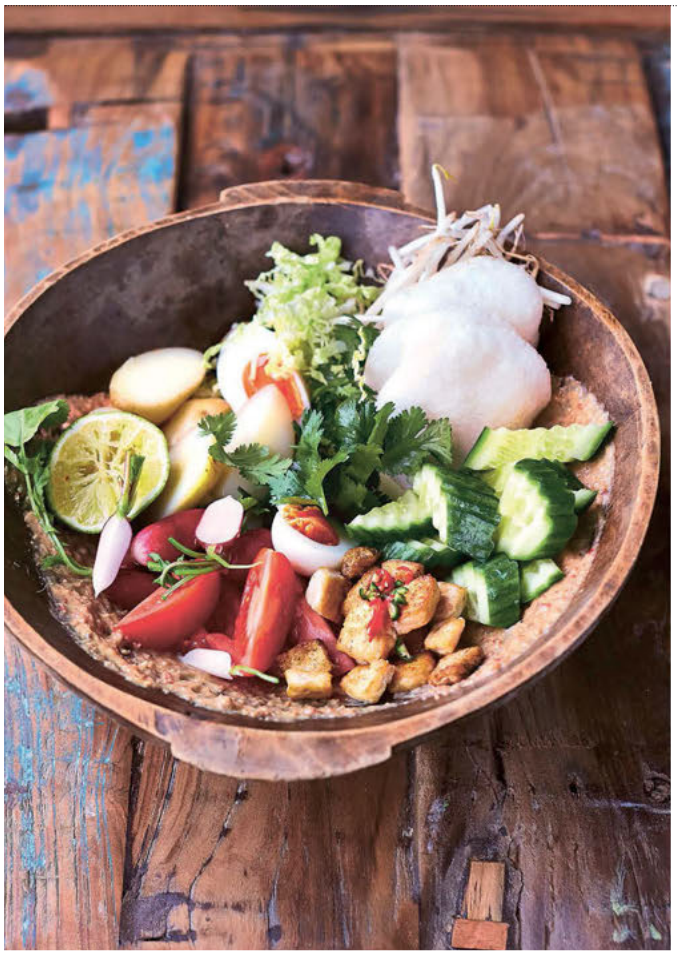
Put the ricotta into a bowl with a pinch of sea salt and black pepper, then finely grate in the Parmesan-style cheese and a few scrapings of nutmeg. Beat it together, then have a taste to check the balance of seasoning is right – you want the nutmeg to be very subtle.
Generously cover a large tray with semolina, then roll the ricotta mixture into 3cm balls, rolling them in the tray of semolina as you go until really well coated. You should get around 40 gnudi from this amount of mixture. Shake and cover really well with the semolina and leave for 8 hours or preferably overnight in the fridge (don't cover the tray) – the semolina will dehydrate the ricotta, giving the gnudi a lovely fine coating.
The gnudi will only take 3 minutes to cook and I like to cook them in 2-portion batches to take care of them. So, shake the excess semolina off 2 portions-worth of gnudi and cook them in boiling salted water while you melt a large knob of butter in a frying pan on a medium heat and pick in about 20 sage leaves to crisp up. Remove the crispy leaves to a plate and scoop the gnudi directly from the water into the frying pan, adding a spoonful of the cooking water. When the butter and water have emulsified, take off the heat and grate over a layer of Parmesan-style cheese, add just a few drops of lemon juice, then toss together. Serve in warm bowls straight away with an extra grating of nutmeg and Parmesan-style cheese and the crispy sage leaves, while you get on with the next batch, wiping the frying pan clean between batches. Welcome to the naked club.
PER SERVING: 455 CALS, 35.0G FAT, 21.8G SAT

"Gnudi is a fantastic dish – you must make it. It's elegant, light in texture, easy to make and for most people, very unusual. My dear friend April Bloomfield, from the very cool Spotted Pig in New York, has recently made this dish most famous, but it certainly dates back at least a good thirty or forty years, and is made all over Tuscany. Gnudi means naked, and quite simply this is a ricotta ravioli without the pasta (aka naked). The proviso for this dish being genius to the point where your guests won't stop talking about it is to use top-quality ricotta, butter and Parmesan-style cheese, as well as beautiful freshly picked sage"















"This is a mega salad that has its roots in Sundanese cooking and has now become the typical street food of Jakarta in Indonesia. Gado-gado means medley or potpourri, which refers to all the different seasonal veggies and ingredients that are used, making it slightly different wherever you go and whatever the time of year. Tossed with the most incredible peanut dressing, which to be honest is more of a substantial sauce, and served with something crunchy on the side... it's a winning combination"



GORGEOUS GADO-GADO

Serves 4
Ready in 40 mins

Salad
400g new potatoes
4 large free-range eggs
400g firm silken tofu
sesame oil
½ a Chinese cabbage
2 ripe tomatoes
1 handful of radishes
½ a cucumber
2 handfuls of beansprouts (ready to eat)
½ a bunch of fresh coriander (15g)
optional: vegetarian prawn crackers
optional: 1 fresh bird's-eye chilli

Sauce
1 clove of garlic
50g palm sugar
120g crunchy peanut butter
1–2 fresh red chillies
juice of 2 limes
1 tablespoon low-salt soy sauce
1 tablespoon tamarind paste

Start by prepping all your salad ingredients. Scrub the potatoes and cook in boiling salted water for around 15 minutes, or until tender, then halve or slice up. Soft-boil the eggs for 6 minutes, or longer if you prefer them more cooked. Cut the tofu into 2½cm chunks and fry in a splash of sesame oil for around 15 minutes, or until golden, then sprinkle lightly with sea salt. Finely shred the cabbage if you want it raw or, if you'd rather cook it (which is traditional), cut it into 2cm slices, place in a colander and slowly pour a kettle of boiling water over the top. For me, this is the perfect amount of heat to soften the cabbage but means you keep much of the delicious nutrients in there – feel free to apply this to any other seasonal greens you can find too. Cut the tomatoes into wedges, quarter the radishes and slice the cucumber (I use my crinkle-cut knife – you should get one!). Season everything from a height with a little salt.

Next, put all the sauce ingredients into a blender, peeling the garlic and grating in the palm sugar (if needed), then blitz until smooth. Have a taste and adjust the seasoning, making sure the acidity of the lime sings through, so tweak with more, if needed.

Traditionally, you'd take a little bit of everything, put it into a bowl and pour the sauce over the top, which is a fine way to serve it. I like to do the reverse, because I feel that once you pour the sauce over you can't see the care and attention that has gone into the preparation of the ingredients. So I spoon the sauce between four bowls, spread it up around the sides, then divide the ingredients around the bowls, taking a bit of pride in making them look nice. Pick over a few coriander leaves and some finely sliced fresh chilli (if using), then show everyone what a celebration of food this is by getting them to toss together their very own portion.

PER SERVING: 505 CALS, 27G FAT, SAT 5.3G



BOOKSHELF

Adapted from *Jamie's Comfort Food, published by Michael Joseph. Recipe © Jamie Oliver. Photography © Jamie Oliver Enterprises Limited 2014, by David Loftus.**

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

More veg please!

Veggiephile **Yotam Ottolenghi** is back. Here, he shares what inspires him, and three exciting dishes for you to try



Yotam Ottolenghi is always on the lookout for new ideas, whether that's reflecting on the meals of his childhood (he grew up in Jerusalem) or picking up tips while he's travelling (he found the ultimate harrissa recipe in Tunisia). But, he says in his new book *Plenty More* (£27, Ebury Press), you don't have to do much more than flick through a magazine to get that light bulb moment for a fantastic dish. "My collection of magazines takes me on journeys into the creative minds of other cooks. It might start off from an image or an idea that I find – combining sorrel with mustard seeds, or roasting carrots with orange halves – which sparks a chain reaction leading to a brand new dish."

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

Although he claims not to want to be pigenholed as someone who only cooks vegetables, Yotam's love affair with greens is obvious from the intricate and exciting ways he uses them and encourages you to do the same. "As soon as I opened my eyes [to vegetarian cooking] I began discovering a world of ingredients and techniques, of dishes and skills that ceaselessly informed me and fed me. There are a whole range of cuisines, dishes and ingredients that make vegetables shine as bright as any star." Why not follow his lead and see if you can follow this recipes below, and then make them your own? We would love to hear your variants on these dishes.

Tweet us @cookveg or email youtips@cookveg.co.uk

AUBERGINE WITH BLACK GARLIC

E GF £+

Serves 4
Ready in 40 mins

3 medium aubergines, sliced widthways into 1.5cm rounds
200ml olive oil
8 large black garlic cloves
200g Greek yoghurt
1 1/2 tsp lemon juice
7 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced
3 red chillies, sliced on the diagonal into 3mm rounds
5g dill leaves
5g basil leaves
5g tarragon leaves
salt and black pepper

1 Preheat the oven to 250C/475F/Gas 9 (or to its highest setting). Place the aubergine rounds in a large bowl with 60ml of the olive oil, half teaspoon of salt and a good grind of black pepper. Mix well and spread out on two large baking trays lined with greaseproof paper. Roast in the oven until golden-brown and completely soft – about 30 minutes. Remove and set aside to cool.

2 Place the black garlic cloves in the small bowl of a food processor with 1/3 teaspoon of salt, 2 tablespoons of oil, 2 tablespoons of yoghurt and the lemon juice. Blitz for a minute, to form a rough paste, and then transfer to a medium bowl. Mix through the rest of the yoghurt and keep in the fridge until needed.

3 Heat the remaining 110ml of oil in a small saucepan on a high heat. Add the garlic and chilli slices, reduce the heat to medium and fry for about five minutes, stirring from time to time, until the garlic is golden-brown and the chilli is crispy. Use a slotted spoon to transfer the garlic and chilli on to a kitchen paper-lined plate. Arrange the aubergine slices, overlapping, on a platter. Spoon the yoghurt sauce on top, sprinkle over the chilli and garlic and finish with the herbs.

PER SERVING: 551 CALS, 55.5G FAT





FRIED UPMA WITH POACHED EGG

Serves 4
Ready in 1 hr 15 mins

100g chana dhal
1 1/2 tbsp sunflower oil, plus extra for greasing the tray
1 small onion, chopped
2 tsp cumin seeds
30g fresh root ginger, peeled and finely chopped
1 small green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
20 fresh curry leaves
2 tsp black mustard seeds, toasted
1/3 tsp curry powder
1/4 tsp ground turmeric
30g unsalted peanuts, toasted and roughly chopped
200g coarse semolina
60g ghee or clarified butter
4 free-range eggs
1 tbsp white wine vinegar
100g Indian lime pickle
120g Greek yoghurt

1 Bring a small pan of water to the boil and add the chana dhal. Cook for 30 minutes, or until just cooked. Drain, refresh under cold water and set aside.
2 Heat the oil in a large frying pan on a medium heat. Add the onion and cumin and cook for four minutes. Add the ginger, chilli, curry leaves, black mustard seeds, curry powder and turmeric and cook for two minutes more, stirring often. Add the peanuts, cooked dhal and one teaspoon of salt and fry for another minute, stirring from time to time. Add the semolina, pour over 400ml of water and cook for a final two minutes.
3 Lightly oil a 20x20cm tray and spread out the semolina mix. Use a palette knife to flatten it down before setting aside for about 20 minutes, to cool and set. Wipe down the frying pan, add the butter or ghee and place on a high heat. Use a knife to cut the upma into four squares and then cut each square in half on the diagonal. Add the triangles to the pan and fry for about six minutes, turning once, so that both sides turn golden and crispy.
4 You will need to do this in two batches so keep them warm, in a low oven, while you continue with the second batch, adding more butter if you need to.
5 Finally, poach the eggs. Fill a shallow saucepan with enough water for a whole egg to cook in. Add the vinegar and bring to a rapid boil. To poach each egg, carefully break it into a cup, then gently pour into the boiling water. Immediately remove the pan from the heat and set it aside. After about four minutes the egg should be poached to perfection. Using a slotted spoon, carefully transfer the poached egg to a bowl of warm water to keep it from cooling down. Once all the eggs are done, dry them on kitchen paper.
6 Put two triangles on each plate, leaning one up against the other. Spoon a poached egg alongside, with some pickle, if you like, along with some yoghurt. Serve at once.

PER SERVING: 553 CALS, 27.7G FAT

MERINGUE ROULADE WITH ROSE PETALS AND FRESH RASPBERRIES

Serves 8
Ready in 40 mins

For the meringue
4 free-range egg whites
250g caster sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp white wine vinegar
1 tsp cornflour

For the cream
100g mascarpone
1 tbsp icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
1 1/2 tbsp rose water
400ml whipping cream

For the filling
150g fresh raspberries
2 tbsp dried rose petals
1 tsp slivered pistachios (or regular if unavailable), crushed

1 Preheat the oven to 160C/325F/Gas 3. Line the base and sides of a 33x24cm Swiss roll tin with greaseproof paper. Allow the paper to come about 1cm above the sides of the tin. In a large, clean bowl, whisk the egg whites with an electric mixer until they begin to firm up. Add the caster sugar to the whites in spoonfuls or tip into the bowl in a slow stream. Continue whisking until you achieve a firm, glossy meringue. Using a large metal spoon, gently fold in the vanilla essence, vinegar and cornflour. Spread the mixture inside the lined tin and level with a palette knife.
2 Bake in the oven for 30 minutes, until a crust forms and the meringue is cooked through (it will still feel soft to the touch). Remove from the oven and allow to cool in the tin. Tip the cooled meringue on to a fresh piece of greaseproof paper. Carefully peel off the lining paper.
3 Meanwhile, place the mascarpone in a bowl, along with the icing sugar and rose water. Whisk to combine, then add the whipping cream. Whisk by hand for about four minutes, until the cream just holds its shape. Spread most of the mascarpone cream over the original underside of the meringue, reserving a few tablespoons. Leave a small border around the edge of the meringue. Scatter most of the raspberries and 1½ tablespoons of rose petals all over the cream.
4 Use the paper to assist you in rolling up the meringue along its long edge, until you get a log shape. Carefully transfer the log on to a serving dish. Use the remaining cream to create a rough wavy strip along the top of the log. Chill for at least 30 minutes. When ready to serve, dust the log with icing sugar, scatter the remaining rose petals and pistachios and dot with the remaining raspberries.

PER SERVING: 393 CALS, 25.3G FAT

"Light, pretty, festive and special, this can be served as either a Christmas Yule log (without the chocolate or the sponge) or the perfect pudding for lunch"

BOOKSHELF



Recipes taken from *Plenty More* by Yotam Ottolenghi (£27, Ebury Press) Photography by Johnathan Lovekin.



CURRIED SQUASH, LENTIL & COCONUT SOUP



KEEP YOUR COOL

Be prepared for any foodie eventuality over the Christmas period with a few freeze-ahead dishes like these...

CURRIED SQUASH, LENTIL & COCONUT SOUP

Serves 6
Ready in 35 mins

1 tbsp olive oil
1 butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and diced
200g carrots, diced
1 tbsp mild curry powder containing turmeric
100g red split lentils
700ml vegan vegetable stock
400ml can reduced-fat coconut milk
roughly chopped coriander, to garnish
naan bread, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large pan, add the squash and carrots, sizzle for one minute, then stir in the curry powder and cook for one minute more. Tip in the lentils, vegetable stock and coconut milk, and give everything a good stir. Bring to the boil, then turn the heat down and simmer for 15-20 minutes until everything is tender.

2 Using a hand blender or food processor, blitz until as smooth as you like. Season and reheat if you need to. Serve scattered with roughly chopped coriander and some garlic and coriander naan bread alongside.

PER SERVING (WITHOUT NAAN): 285 CALS, 14.4G FAT



VEGETARIAN CASSEROLE

FOODS THAT FREEZE WELL

A few foods are better for having been frozen, such as veg purées, soups or stews, because they're less likely to dry out when you come to reheat it.

Breads freeze well, as do un-assembled and un-iced cakes. Doughs are also great to freeze.

You can also freeze fresh fruit and veg, although it's best to spread slices out on a baking tray when freezing, before wrapping up to avoid feezer burn.

VEGETARIAN CASSEROLE

Serves 4
Ready in 50 mins

TIPS FOR FREEZING LEFTOVERS

It's always best to wrap any food that you're going to freeze very well, to avoid freezer burn. You can do this using freezer-proof food containers, or thick plastic freezer bags. Make sure you label each box or bag with the contents and the date it was frozen on, to avoid playing 'leftovers roulette'.

You don't have to just freeze leftover meals either. Got a bottle of milk you don't need? Bought too much ginger? Created a lot of veg trimmings? Your freezer can handle it all! You can even freeze fresh herbs – just wash and slice them before packing into ice cube trays so they can be popped out and used easily.

"Make ahead to improve the flavour of this Mediterranean stew of peppers, courgettes, tomatoes and lentils. Then you can just reheat it when you want it"

1 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil
1 onion, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, sliced
1 tsp smoked paprika
½ tsp ground cumin
1 tbsp dried thyme
3 medium carrots, sliced
2 medium celery sticks, finely sliced
1 red and 1 yellow pepper, deseeded and chopped
2 x 400g cans tomatoes or peeled cherry tomatoes
250ml vegan vegetable stock
2 courgettes, sliced thickly
2 thyme sprigs
250g cooked lentils
wild and white basmati rice, mash or quinoa, to serve

1 Heat the oil in a large heavy-based pan. Add the onion and cook gently for 5-10 minutes until softened. Add the garlic, spices, dried thyme, carrots, celery and peppers, and cook for five minutes. Add the tomatoes, vegetable stock, courgettes and thyme sprigs, and cook for 20-25 minutes.
2 Take out the thyme sprigs. Stir in the lentils and bring back to a simmer. Serve with wild and white basmati rice, mash or quinoa.

PER SERVING (NO SIDES): 207 CALS, 5.3G FAT

WALNUT & RED-PEPPER PESTO PASTA

Serves 4
Ready in 30 mins

400g strozzapreti or casarecce pasta, or another short pasta shape
100g walnuts
3 roasted red peppers from a jar, roughly chopped
25g vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese, grated, plus extra to garnish
1 small garlic clove, roughly chopped
large pack fresh basil, plus a few leaves to garnish
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
50g mascarpone

1 Cook the pasta according to the pack instructions.
2 Meanwhile, toast the walnuts in a dry pan for a few minutes. Add half the walnuts to the small bowl of a food processor or a hand chopper, along with the red peppers, veggie Parmesan, garlic, basil, oil and some seasoning. Whiz to a paste, adding a splash of water from the pasta if it is a little dry.
3 Drain the pasta, reserving a cup of the cooking water. Return the pasta to the pan and set over a low heat. Add the pesto, mascarpone and 3-4 tablespoons of the reserved pasta water, then stir until the mascarpone has melted, adding a splash more pasta water if the sauce needs thinning.
4 To serve, crush the remaining walnuts in your hand and scatter over the pasta with a few more basil leaves and some extra veggie Parmesan.

PER SERVING: 699 CALS, 34.6G FAT

BOOKSHELF

Recipes taken from the BBC Good Food series of cookbooks: *30 Minute Suppers; *One-pot Dishes**; *Veggie Dishes* (all £3.99, BBC Books).**

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

FOODS THAT DON'T FREEZE AS WELL...

Avoid freezing the following foods:
Salad vegetables, including cucumber, lettuce and radishes, become water-logged and limp when frozen.
Plain, cooked **rice and pasta** goes mushy and loses flavour.
Cooked **egg whites** will either turn hard or soft and rubbery.
Milk sauces will curdle or split when defrosted.
If you're cooking a meal to freeze it, avoid adding a **cheese topping** to your lasagne or casserole. Instead, pop it on after defrosting your dinner, and before you're baking it in the oven.
The flavours of **seasonings** are often affected by the freezing process. Season your dishes lightly before freezing, and season before cooking instead.



THE STAYING-IN-TO-WRAP FEAST



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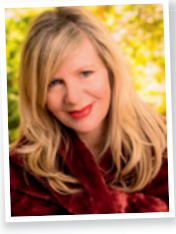
CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

Let's face it, Christmas is not the most eco-friendly time of year – extra rubbish, chopped-down trees and all those flashing lights! But you can make a difference with these beautiful tea lights and Christmas candles from Traidcraft, which are all fairtrade. To find out more about the range visit www.traidcraftshop.co.uk



Gifts That Won't Cost The Earth

The Vegetarian Society's online shop is a great destination for ethical gifts. We love this Desktop Garden, £5.50, which is a compact recyclable aluminium tube that contains all you need to grow a garden at your desk. Profits go straight back into the charitable work, so you can be sure that your purchases will help do great things for veggies across the UK. **See the range by going to www.vegsoc.org**



WINTER WARMERS

JANEY LEE GRACE IS THE QUEEN OF ETHICAL LIVING. HERE, SHE SHOWS YOU HOW TO KEEP COSY THIS MONTH

"Block out those annoying drafts under doors with an old-school draught excluder. It's easy to make your own funky one using bits of reclaimed fabric. You can fill it with a biodegradable filling such as buckwheat. A huge amount of heat is lost through windows too, so ensure that you have decent heavy-lined curtains (always opt for pre-loved). You can get fantastic quality curtains from a curtain exchange for a fraction of the price they would be new."

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT JANEY BY VISITING WWW.JANEYLEEGRACE.COM

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Deck the tree



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Avoid imitations:

WILL THE REAL WASABI PLEASE STAND UP?

Far from the green gunk squirted from a tube like a cheap toothpaste, real wasabi is a foodie's dream. **Gareth May** explains how to use this misunderstood ingredient in the kitchen

What do you think of when you think of wasabi? A green paste packing nuclear heat, a smidgen of which has the taste buds pleading for mercy and the eyes streaming with tears? You're not alone. Wasabi, at least, as we know it in the West, is not for the faint of heart. Yet, all of that is about to change, especially if a small farm in Hampshire has anything to say about.

Wasabi Swindle

The Wasabi Company, Europe's first ever wasabi farm, is here to tell us the truth. Turns out, wasabi as we know it, isn't wasabi at all. When I visited the farm earlier this year, as I sploshed through the mineral-rich spring water, the lush green leaves of the submerged wasabi plants fanning out on the raised gravel beds with a sweet watery earthiness permeating the air, I couldn't believe the radioactive paste I'd eaten at various sushi chains came from here.

'Quite often, on a paste it will say 3 or 4 percent wasabi, but that doesn't necessarily have to be wasabi rhizome, the swollen plant stem packed with all the nutrients and goodness,' James Harper of The Wasabi Company told me, adding that even the powders with 10 or 20 percent 'wasabi' use ground up leaf or root. In fact, many pastes don't have any wasabi at all, just horseradish, food colouring and a bit of sugar.

Hot Stuff

It's a deception revealed in the flavour. The fluorescent green gunk with the texture of Playdoh you get in those plastic bento boxes from the supermarket, the 'condiment' wasabi if you will, molests the sinuses and leaves the whole face wide-eyed and delirious. Rather than this disorientating explosion of heat, fresh wasabi is a slow burner, building at the back of the mouth and refreshing the sinuses rather than blowing them to smithereens. Real wasabi isn't just a flavour, it's an experience.

Unique Crop

It is, however, a plant that needs dedication to flourish. Wasabi grows in a 'Goldilocks Effect' climate (not too hot, not too cold); loosely roots itself in fresh flowing spring water; and is only picked after one and a half to two years



FRESH WASABI IS AVAILABLE TO BUY ONLINE FROM WWW.THEWASABICOMPANY.CO.UK



growth, requiring a very trial and error farming process. If wasabi is such a high risk crop, why grow it? Jon Old, the owner of The Wasabi Company, told me for that exact reason: 'Because it's a high risk crop, because no one else is going to do it and because we've got the raw material.' The raw materials being flowing Hampshire spring water and gravel beds at one time used by their sister firm: The Watercress Company.

However, a farmer's loyalty to wasabi pays off with its unique mineral-rich flavour; a 'taste of the elements' which excites chefs. Matthew Tomkinson, head chef of the Michelin-starred restaurant The Terrace in Beaulieu, likens wasabi to truffle, telling me that unlike other 'interesting' foods, wasabi actually has a bite to match its bark.

Back to the Kitchen

It certainly does. After the farm visit I'm given some fresh wasabi to take home. It's a great ingredient to have whole as well, as most of the plant can be used in some form or other. As you move down towards the rhizome the taste of wasabi intensifies so the leaves are quite mild, there's a slight taste of wasabi in them, the stems are a little bit more flavoursome and a little bit sweet but quite fibrous and the rhizome itself is where the best of the flavour is, easily grated into a fine paste and, at its simplest, can be added to sauces or dressings or simply folded into butter or mayonnaise and even mashed potatoes.

The leaves can also be eaten (at Kyoto Kitchen in Winchester they actually make their sushi rolls using fresh wasabi leaves) and so too the roots and stem, which can be chopped up and pickled, as they do in Japan.

The rhizome though is the main event. To prepare the wasabi you must first peel off the outer layers of tough skin and then grate the root in a circular motion using a purpose built grater (available from The Wasabi Company). Grating wasabi this way breaks down the cell walls inside the rhizome combining the myrosinase enzymes (the plant's defence mechanism) with the glucosinolates (the plant's sugars) to form isothiocyanates, which hold wasabi's unique flavour and heat. As Jon Old told me, 'When you eat fresh wasabi you're eating a live chemical reaction.'

Food with Drama

Once the wasabi is grated it needs to be used within 20 minutes or it loses its potency and its flavour. It's for this reason that some restaurants have their waiting staff grate wasabi at the table. Dave Spanner, Development Chef at Australasia, Manchester, who says fresh wasabi is 'one of the best flavours in the world', serves wasabi this way, with a bit of theatre.

Ready to serve, wasabi is an incredibly versatile ingredient. At The Modern Pantry in London they serve courgette fritters with a pea and wasabi purée; a salsa (a similar recipe can be found on the right of the page); and they also combine the leaves and the paste for a rollicking dish, wasabi and soya-marinated mozzarella.

'We make up a marinade using light soy sauce, red chilli, lime leaves, ginger and extra virgin olive oil,' Anna Hansen, Head Chef says. 'We then submerge the fresh mozzarella and wasabi leaves in this mix for 24 hours, after that we remove them from the liquid, lay the wasabi leaves out, place a mozzarella ball in the middle, grate over some fresh wasabi, then wrap tightly, store in the fridge and warm to order.'

In the kitchen, wasabi is just as mesmerising as it is out in the field. It can be used in various cuisines, and as with other earthy flavours such as truffle, a little goes a long way. Treat your taste buds. Throw out the paste and go fresh, you won't regret it.



TENDERSTEM & SPRING ONION TEMPURA WITH WASABI

Serves 4
Ready in 20 mins

For the dipping sauce:
4 tbsp tamari (Japanese soy sauce)
1 tsp caster sugar
1 tbsp sesame oil

For the tempura batter:
2-3 tsp freshly grated wasabi to taste
3 tsp toasted sesame seeds
80g cornflour, sifted
80g plain flour, sifted
1/2 tsp salt
200ml ice cold beer (or soda water)
200g Tenderstem
1 bunch spring onions trimmed
2 tbsp cornflour

1 Make the dipping sauce by mixing all the ingredients in a small bowl. Set aside.
2 Preheat a deep fat fryer to 180C/350F.
3 Mix the flours and add the salt. Pour in the beer and whisk lightly – don't worry about a few lumps it's important not to over-mix and also to use the batter immediately.
4 Dust the Tenderstem and spring onions all over in the extra cornflour, then dip into the batter to coat all over. Using tongs lower gently into the hot oil and fry for 3-4 minutes until crisp, then drain on kitchen paper. Eat as soon as possible, with the dipping sauce.

PER SERVING: 281 CALS, 6.9G FAT

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"YOU WILL THANK ME FOR THE TIP; THE AROMATIC QUALITIES OF FRESH BAY ARE SIMPLY AMAZING!"

Great in mulled wine, bread sauce, or nut loaf, the humble bay leaf makes Christmas cooking extra special. **Tim Maddams** explains why you should forget the dried variety and pick your own.



Now then, this is going to be stretching the definition of foraging a little far for some and it's not strictly wild food either, but all around the country there are bay trees waiting for you to take advantage of their fragrant leaves. Often planted as ornamental trees in pots, this member of the laurel family is a cornerstone of base flavours. Soups and stews almost always improve with the addition of some bay and even bay leaf ice cream is well worth a go.

Fresh is best

There is a myth that bay is poisonous and that is why it must be removed from the dish before serving, in fact this is not true. Although many other laurel trees are poisonous, bay is not and I suspect the reason they are removed is to avoid embarrassment should people try and eat them as they are rather woody and could easily choke you! I am often surprised that people buy those little boxes of dried bay leaves when there are bay trees everywhere! The best thing about fresh bay is its pungency. I have heard it said that bay leaves do not fully develop their flavour until they have been dried for a week or two, but frankly I disagree. Fresh bay is versatile, delicious and abundant so get out there and help yourself to a few whenever you get the chance.

Countless ways

Fresh bay has a flavour all of its own and I love to drop a few into the pan when I'm frying off the garlic ready for a curry. Plus, the flavour they impart to mushrooms is a combination not to be missed. And, because they are fresh, they not only flavour the dish but they won't burn straight away like the dried varieties, so you can use them in different ways and at higher temperatures. I often put a twig of bay on top of the BBQ grill before I grill my veg, not only does this help to stop the veg sticking to the grill, but it adds aroma and zing to the smoky dish at the same time. You shouldn't struggle to find plenty of bay trees growing around the place, no matter where you live, and once you spot a couple of good ones you should have a free supply for life. I promise that you will thank me for the tip; the aromatic qualities of fresh bay are simply amazing.

TIM GETS COOKING

Not just for stews and soups, bay leaves can be used in all sorts of exciting ways. Here, Tim gives you three recipes to try

HALLOUMI WITH BAY, GARLIC AND CHILLI

Cut up your halloumi in the usual way. In a frying pan, heat a little vegetable oil and add some whole, unpeeled garlic cloves and a few fresh bay leaves. Cook until the bay begins to crackle, then cook your cheese. Discard the leaves. Dress the whole dish with fresh, finely chopped chilli and a drizzle of excellent olive oil.

BAY LEAF ICE CREAM

Flavour your usual custard with lots of fresh bay when you cook it. Then remove the leaves and churn. Tip the custard into a large, shallow, freezer-proof container, and allow to cool to room temperature. Once at room temperature, place a lid on the custard and chill in the fridge overnight. When it's chilled, transfer the custard to the freezer and take it out every hour, for three hours, to whisk it with an electric handheld whisk. Then leave the ice cream in the freezer for a final freeze, until it is solid.

BAY LEAF ICED TEA

Make an infusion of bay and tea in a pot and allow it to cool. Mix with plenty of ice, slices of lemon and just a little fresh little apple juice.

ILLUSTRATION: LOUISE ABBOTT



THE HEALTHY HOTLIST

Make clever use of these veggie star ingredients with **Vicki Edgson's** simple suppers

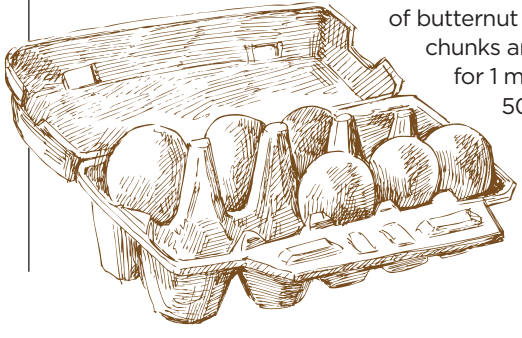
Vicki Edgson, author of seven nutrition and cookery books, including one of our favourite cook books *Honestly Healthy* (£20, Jacqui Small LLP), shows you how to elevate your everyday dinners to superfood status! And, with the cold season upon us, her health-giving recipes adapted from her new book *Gut Gastronomy* (£30, Jacqui Small LLP) couldn't come at a better time.

MY STAR INGREDIENT: EGGS

"The humble egg provides you with virtually every nutrient your body and mind needs, but both yolks and whites are required to provide these. They contain eight amino acids, which can help balance mood. The beauty of a frittata is that you can throw anything in it and eat it hot or cold, making it the perfect take-to-work lunch."

USE IT: Spinach, Butternut Squash and Lentil Frittata

Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. In an ovenproof frying pan, melt 20g of coconut oil and fry 60g of chopped shallots with 1 tsp of curry powder over a low heat. Add 100g of butternut squash cut into chunks and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in 50g of diced courgette and remove from the heat. Allow to slightly cool, then add 50g of cooked Puy lentils, spinach and sliced spring onions and mix well. Blend together 100ml of almond milk, 3 free-range eggs, some salt and pepper and some coriander. Pour over the cooked lentils and vegetables in the pan. Level the top, pushing it down with the back of a spoon, and bake in the preheated oven for about 20 minutes.





MY STAR INGREDIENT: CANNED BEANS & CANNED TOMATOES

These are a larder must, as you can turn any combination of vegetables into a high protein meal-in-a-bowl. Plus, cooked tomatoes are far higher in the protective antioxidant lycopene than when raw."

USE IT: Tomato and Bean Soup

Drain the 150g tinned borlotti beans and cook in a pan for 30 minutes. Drain well and set aside. Make the pesto by pounding together 50g basil leaves, 1 small garlic clove, 80ml extra virgin olive oil, 30g toasted pine nuts and 30g vegetarian Parmesan-style cheese until smooth. Cover and leave in a cool place. To make the soup, fry 1 chopped onion, 2 diced celery sticks, 1 sliced small leek, 1 carrot. Add 1 crushed garlic clove, a few oregano sprigs and salt, and simmer. Next, add 100ml strained passata, 300g canned tomatoes, 50g sun-dried tomatoes, soaked overnight and 750ml marigold bouillon stock. Simmer for 15 minutes over a low heat. Remove from the heat and add half the cooked beans and blitz in a jug blender. Serve the soup warm with a good dollop of pesto and the rest of the beans.

MY STAR INGREDIENT: WILD RICE

"The black colour of wild rice tends to cook out leaving you with a light-coloured dish that is a rich source of B1, B2 and B3 for energy and a clear mind. It has a delicious nutty flavour, which lends itself well for this tasty risotto."

USE IT: Wild Rice Risotto

Heat a pan over a medium heat. Sauté 40g chopped shallots, 200g diced celeriac and a few sprigs of thyme until the shallots are soft. Add the 250g of wild rice and 75ml of white wine and cook until the wine reduces by two-thirds. Stir in a couple of ladles of marigold bouillon stock until most of the liquid has been absorbed. Every 45 seconds, add a little more of the litre of broth until the wild rice is cooked through. The whole process will take about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, roast 40g pecans in a preheated oven at 170C/350F/Gas 4 for 8 minutes. When the risotto is cooked, remove from the heat and add the spinach and vegetarian Roquefort-style cheese.



MY STAR INGREDIENT: CAULIFLOWER

Cauliflower is the unsung hero when compared to its brother broccoli. It's rich in phytonutrients, which may help to balance female hormones in the cases of PCOS.

USE IT: Roasted Cauliflower Ratatouille

Blanch 150g cauliflower in a pan of boiling water for 1 minute, then drain and refresh in cold water. Put the 80g of red, yellow and green peppers, 50g of red onion, cauliflower florets and 50g of courgette on a non-stick baking tray and drizzle with the oil. Add 1 tbsp of chopped rosemary and thyme leaves and season with salt and pepper. Roast in oven for 15-20 minutes until golden brown, turning the vegetables halfway through cooking. To make the sauce, gently sweat 50g onion and 1 clove of crushed garlic with a pinch of cinnamon, 2 bay leaves, 1 tbsp of thyme and pinch of allspice until golden brown. Add 1 tsp of honey, 1 tsp of cider vinegar, 400g tin of chopped tomatoes and enough vegetarian stock for your taste. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer and cook for 20 minutes. Cook for 5 minutes to bring all the flavours together. Serve the ratatouille warm.

MY STAR INGREDIENT: SPICE MIX

"The anti-inflammatory, anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties of all these spices are recognised as being exceptionally potent and particularly important in the early part of the year, when bugs are abound. Make up a large amount of this mix and keep it in your store cupboard, as it can be added to most soups and casseroles."

MAKE IT: 1 tsp grated nutmeg, 1 tsp ground cumin, 2 pimentos (sweet red peppers), crushed in a pestle and mortar, 1/3 tsp cayenne pepper, 1 tsp paprika, 1 cinnamon stick, broken in half.

USE IT: Moroccan Spiced Pumpkin Soup

Preheat the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4. Melt 20g butter in a large thick-bottomed pan over a medium heat. Add 600g pumpkin chunks, 80g sliced leek, 125g diced carrots and 60g celery and cook for 10 minutes.

Add the spice mix and then cook for a couple of minutes, stirring continuously so that the spices don't burn. Add 2 bay leaves and cover with the vegetable stock. Bring to a simmer and cook gently for 20 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Remove the bay leaves and cinnamon sticks and blitz the soup in a blender with the mint until smooth. Garnish the soup with a sprinkle of the toasted pumpkin seeds.



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"Mushrooms are the not-so-secret weapon of the meat-free kitchen"

The Contented Cook **Xanthe Clay** looks to fungi for a burst of flavour this January



It might be dark outside but there is plenty to celebrate in the kitchen. Mushrooms are the not-so-secret weapon of the meat-free kitchen, packed with umami-rich flavour that makes for a depth of savouriness, which is especially welcome when there's a damp chill to the air.

Thankfully, these days there are plenty of varieties to choose from, not just button and flats – try mellow chestnut, delicate oyster and garlicky shiitake. Some supermarkets even have British-grown exotics such as clusters of tiny elfin, faintly bitter enoki or woody shimeji, and greengrocers may have even more precious booty like Wood Blewitts and Velvet Shank.

But, whichever mushroom you bag, bear in mind that they are more than 90 percent water – and simply throwing them into a casserole or giving them a quick sauté makes for a flabby dish. Instead, slice them or tear them into pieces and cook them in a wide frying pan with a little butter or oil until virtually all that moisture has evaporated. When the mushrooms are taking on a gold colour, and there is a suggestion of crispness at the edges, then they are ready to add to dishes. I promise you will taste that flavour mushrooming!



RECIPE TAKEN FROM *THE CONTENTED COOK* BY XANTHE CLAY (£19.99, KYLE BOOKS). * INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

MINI CROISSANTS WITH MUSHROOMS AND THYME

Makes 24
Ready in 40 mins

30g butter
1/2 onion, finely chopped
225g mushrooms (include some dried, soaked porcini if you can), finely chopped
1 small garlic clove, crushed
leaves from thyme sprigs
1 packet of croissant dough (available as a tin in the chill cabinet of large)
1 free-range egg, beaten
poppy seeds, optional

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. Melt the butter and fry the onion for five minutes, until softened. Add the mushrooms, garlic and thyme and cook until all the liquid from the mushrooms has evaporated. Season well and set aside to cool.

2 Peel off one triangle of croissant dough. Roll it out on a lightly-floured surface until the it measures about 28 x 13cm. Cut off the tip about halfway down to make one small triangle, and divide the rest into three triangles.

3 Place 1/4 teaspoon of mushroom mixture at the broad end, and roll it up towards the centre. Make sure the point is stuck down securely and pull the tips firmly round to the front to form a croissant shape. They tend to straighten as they bake. Repeat with the rest of the dough and place on a greased baking tray. Brush with beaten egg and sprinkle with poppy seeds if you like. Bake for 10-12 minutes until golden brown, and serve warm.

PER SERVING: 367 CALS, 32G FAT



GET TO THE SAUCE!

Sometimes it's nice to get back to basics and cook the things we so often buy and take for granted. Here, we show you how to make your own condiments

HOMEMADE TOMATO SAUCE

Makes 1 bottle
Ready in 1 hr 30 mins

500g British tomatoes
30g brown sugar
70ml white wine vinegar
1 garlic clove, sliced
large pinch of mustard powder
a dash of vegetarian Worcestershire sauce

1 Quarter the tomatoes and put into a non-stick saucepan with the sugar and water.
2 Add the garlic to the pan along with the Worcestershire sauce and mustard. Bring to the boil and simmer for an hour.
3 Purée the tomatoes and then push through a sieve. It will keep for up to two weeks in the fridge.

PER BATCH: 118 CALS, 1.6 G FAT

MAKE YOUR OWN VINEGAR

Vinegar making requires very little effort. Simply take any unfortified alcohol booze and pop in a container. Tie some cloth around the top so it can breathe, and leave in a darkish, warmish place. It may take up to six months for the vinegar to be ready, but you can speed this process up by using a 'mother of vinegar' starter, available from all good health food shops.

CREAMY MAYONNAISE

Makes 1/2 jar
Ready in 20 mins

1 small garlic clove, crushed
2 free-range egg yolks
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tbsp cider vinegar
250ml mixed oils (mild oils, such as light olive, sunflower, rapeseed and vegetable all work well)
juice of ½ small lemon

1 Mix the garlic to a paste using salt. Add pepper, yolks, mustard and vinegar. Mix together.
2 Mix your oils together, then, very slowly, start adding the oil to the egg. Adding the oil slowly is key here, as it has to be mixed in thoroughly to the eggs before you add any more.
3 Once it's holding its shape, taste, add a little lemon juice and season again if necessary. It will keep in a sterilised jar for up to one week.

PER BATCH: 2,379 CALS, 261 G FAT

VEGAN MAYONNAISE

Makes 1/2 jar
Ready in 20 mins

120ml soya milk
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp Dijon mustard
sea salt and black pepper
235ml mixed oils
juice of 1/2 small lemon

1 Whisk together the milk, lemon juice and Dijon. Season and whisk again until thoroughly combined.
2 Like the dairy mayonnaise, mix your oils together and start adding it slowly to your soya milk mixture. Once thickened, adjust the seasoning and serve.

PER BATCH: 1,984 CALS, 217.4 G FAT

POSH PICCALILLI

Makes approximately 1 kilo
Ready in 40 mins

700ml malt vinegar
2 tsp coriander seeds
2 garlic cloves, peeled and thinly sliced
400g shallots, peeled
3 tbsp English mustard
2 tbsp plain flour
2 tsp turmeric
1 tsp ground ginger
pinch of allspice
200ml cider vinegar
225g granulated sugar
1/2 to 1 red chilli, deseeded and finely chopped (optional)
300g small cauliflower florets
100g green beans, trimmed and cut into 4cm lengths
1 bay leaf

1 Place the vinegar, coriander and garlic in a pan and bring to the boil. Add 1/2 tsp of salt and blanch the shallots for three minutes.
2 Remove from the pan and reserve. Repeat with the cauliflower blanching for two minutes and then the green beans for one minute and set aside. Reserve the vinegar liquid.
3 Whisk together the mustard, flour, turmeric, ginger, allspice and vinegar. Place the mustard mixture in a pan and whisk in the reserved malt vinegar and sugar, stirring until the sugar has dissolved then bring to the boil. Simmer for six minutes and then add the chilli and cook for two minutes.
4 Add the cooked veg and the bay leaf, stir well and take off the heat.
5 Spoon the mixture into sterilised jars or kilner jars.

PER BATCH: 1,469 CALS, 6.9 G FAT

ILLUSTRATION BY LOUISE ABBOTT

GREEN PEPPERCORN MUSTARD

Makes 3-5 small jars
Ready in 10 mins

150g yellow mustard seeds
85g brown mustard seeds
1 tbsp green peppercorns in their brine
1 tsp black peppercorns
1 tsp (approx 18) allspice berries
6 dried bird's-eye chillies or 1 tsp dried crushed chillies
250ml water
340ml cider vinegar
2 tsp sea salt

1 Using a pestle and mortar, grind the mustard seeds, green and black pepercorns, allspice and chillies together to a fine grind.
2 Put the water, vinegar and salt into a large bowl, add the ground mustard seed mixture and stir.
3 Leave the mixture to mature for up to five days, stirring daily and covering in between. Give the mixture a short whiz with your stick blender, adding a couple of tablespoons of vinegar if necessary. Spoon into sterilised jars and seal immediately.

PER JAR (5 JARS): 72 CALS, 13.7G FAT

HOW TO... STERILISE A JAR

Wash up your jars with hot soapy water and place on a baking tray in a preheated oven (135C/275F/Gas 1) to dry out completely. If you're using anything with a rubber seal, remove it and place in boiling water. Heating rubber seals in the oven will make them break.

BOOKSHELF



Mustard recipe taken from *Tracklements – Savoury Preserves by Guy Tullberg and Becky Vale (£16.99, Pavilion Books).**

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

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IT'S BEEN TWO YEARS SINCE THEY GOT IN SHAPE, AND THEY'RE STILL COOKING GREAT TASTING FOOD!

We put some foodie questions to our favourite dieters...

You've travelled around the world – where's the best place for vegetarian food?
Both: South India!

What is the best way to lose weight?
Dave: Cooking from scratch so you know what's going into your meals – and getting clued up on what you're putting into your mouth! I still like having fun while I am cooking and I don't deprive myself.
Si: You can still make great-tasting food that doesn't pile on the pounds. Also, I drink less now, but appreciate what I do drink, more.

Would you urge people to ditch the takeaway and get back into the kitchen?
Si: It's all about balance! A little bit of what you fancy every now and again is fine.
Dave: Healthy eating can be good eating you know. It can also make you a better cook. I love re-engineering the dishes we all love that dieters have to run away from. I see it as a challenge – it has to be tasty and healthy. You can make homemade samosas, stir-fries and curries, so you won't be tempted to the local takeaway.

Who do you enjoy cooking for most?
Si: I love cooking for my mates. That moment when you put the plate down in front of them – I absolutely love that. It's instant gratification. And obviously my wife and kids as well!

What's your favourite vegetarian food?
Dave: I like a palak paneer, which is spinach and Indian cheese curry. If you coat the paneer in semolina and garam masala first and fry it up it's delicious and crunchy!
Si: I like a vegetarian mezze – dolmas, hummus, aubergine purée, courgette and feta frittatas.

QUICK-FIRE RECIPE

ROASTED CARROT, PEPPER AND CHICKPEA SALAD

GF V E £

Preheat oven to 220C/400F/Gas 7. Line a roasting dish with baking parchment. Boil **2 diced carrots** for 15 mins, drain and add to roasting dish, add **1 tsp cumin**, drizzle with **olive oil** and season. Add **2 red peppers**, cut lengthways, into the dish. Roast for 20 mins. Remove and put the peppers in a bowl to steam until they are cool. Peel off the skin and cut into strips. Put carrots, pepper and **400g of tinned chickpeas** into a bowl. Add **2 tbsp of dill**, **mint** and **coriander**. Pour over a little dressing of **1 tsp olive oil**, **1 tsp tahini**, **squeeze of lemon juice**, **1 crushed garlic clove**, **pinch of all spice**, **1 tsp cumin** and **1 tsp agave syrup**. Mix altogether and serve.





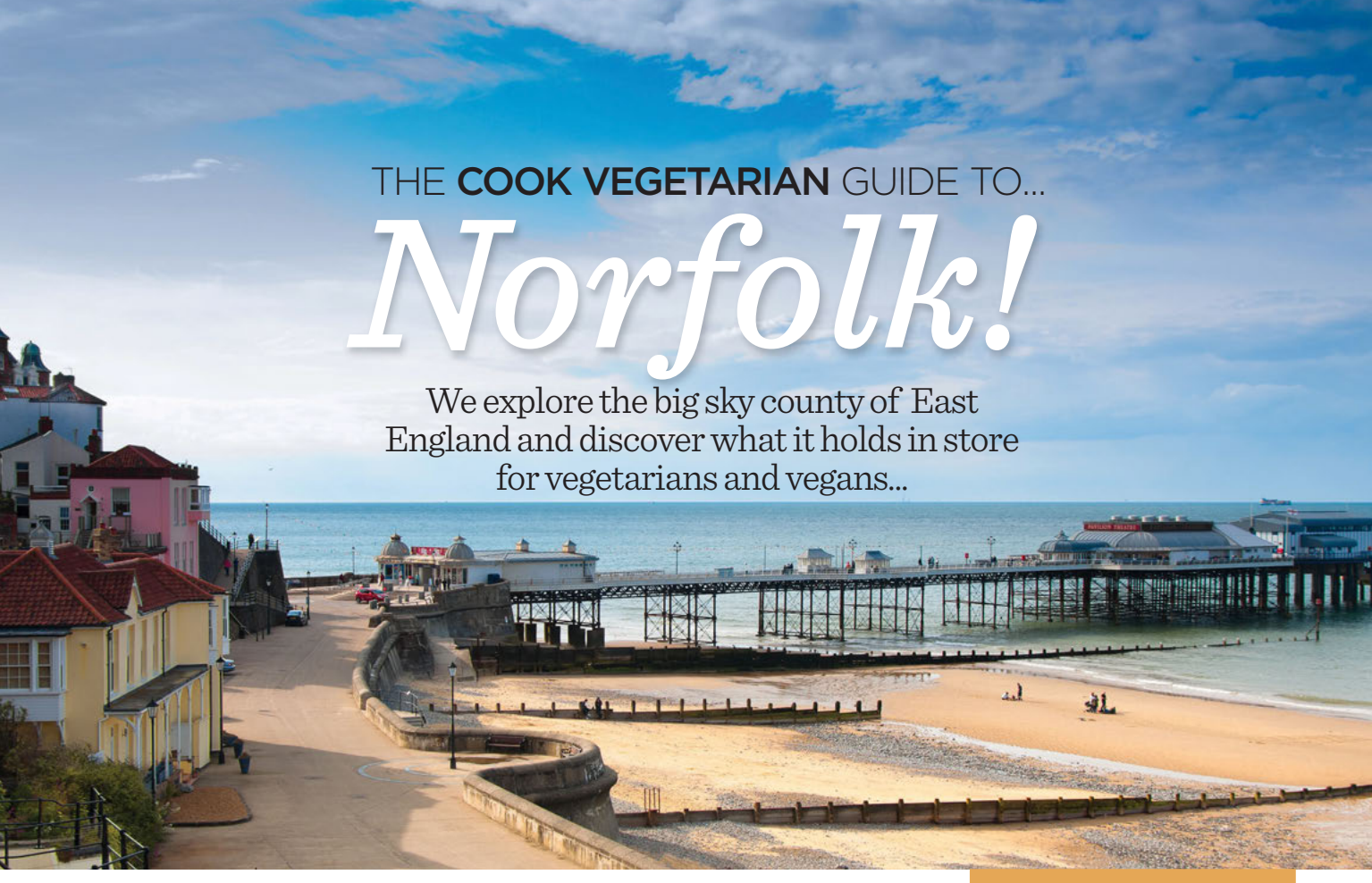


BOOKSHELF

Recipe adapted from The Hairy Bikers new recipe book *The Hairy Dieters Good Eating, (£14.99, Weidenfeld & Nicolson) is out now.**

*INCLUDES NON-VEGETARIAN CONTENT

"We love our vegetables and we've learned that they can be the stars of the show – not just to add a bit of colour on the plate"



THE **COOK VEGETARIAN** GUIDE TO...

Norfolk!

We explore the big sky county of East England and discover what it holds in store for vegetarians and vegans...

MODERN CUISINE

When Jan Wise (of the Veggie Red Lion, Suffolk) met Norwich businessman and vegan of 25 years Mike Hill, they realised they shared a common goal – to create an exceptional meat-free restaurant in or near the city of Norwich. The River Green Cafe was born.

Three years on, and the River Green Cafe is a bustling cafe and restaurant that prides itself on its internationally inspired vegetarian and vegan menu that uses organic and locally-sourced ingredients wherever possible, while catering for all dietary requirements (just let them know when you book).

Starters include Roasted Red Pepper Hummus served with toasted pitta and the Mediterranean Sharing Platter, a medley of antipasti such as mozzarella, roasted red peppers, olives, sun-dried tomatoes, artichokes and rocket with freshly baked bread. For your main course, you can look forward to eclectic dishes from the traditional Mushroom Wellington and Lentil, Carrot and Coriander Burger, to the more exotic Spicy Bean Burrito or the African Sweet Potato Stew.

Book a table today by calling 01603 622448 or visit www.rivergreencafe.co.uk

NORFOLK VEGETARIANS AND VEGANS IS A VIBRANT COMMUNITY OF LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS WHO MEET FOR BRING-AND-SHARE LUNCHES. FIND OUT MORE AT WWW.VEGFOLK.CO.UK



DID YOU KNOW...

- That half of all the sugar we consume in the UK comes from sugar beet, one of the primary crops of Norfolk farming.
- Colman's has been making its mustard in Norfolk for 200 years.
- Norfolk Saffron has been awarded ISO 3632 category I, the top international grade for saffron meaning it has outstanding colouring strength and flavour.







PHOTO BY WWW.PAULMACRO.COM

COME IN NORFOLK!

When Claire Nugent and Nigel Morter came across the control tower for the former RAF North Creake Airfield, they fell in love with the building's modernist architecture and began to restore and transform it, before throwing open the doors to B&B guests. As vegetarians themselves, Claire and Nigel couldn't imagine cooking sausages and bacon, so opened one of the few veggie B&Bs in the region.

Book in to stay at the Control Tower B&B and enjoy all the sumptuous luxury its art deco-styled rooms offer, in the bustling agricultural hamlet of Egmere, just three miles south from Wells-next-the-Sea, one of the most beautiful towns on the North Norfolk Coast. And for breakfast, choose between delicious cooked breakfasts that include poached, fried or scrambled eggs, potato cakes and sautéed mushrooms, or opt for something from the lighter options like the delicious drop scones with butter and jam. All the ingredients are of the highest quality, with vegan and gluten-free options available – just let Claire or Nigel know when you book.

To book your stay, or for more information, visit www.controltowerstays.com or call 01328 821574.

SOAK UP THE CULTURE

Combine lunch or coffee with a shopping trip by making a trip to The Art Cafe – situated between Letheringsett and Blakeney – a must. There, you can pick up contemporary arts, crafts and quirky gifts and stop for a spot of breakfast, lunch, indulgent cakes, the best coffee in the area or afternoon tea at its beautiful Vegetarian Society-approved cafe.

The chefs – David Carpenter, Sarah Pearce and Ellie Wade – create a changing seasonal menu of exciting foods that use as many Norfolk-sourced ingredients as possible. Even the coffee comes from its very own Grey Seal Roastery!

The gallery also plays host to exhibitions too, which change on a monthly basis.

For further details of how to get there, or to join the Art Cafe's mailing list, visit www.art-cafe.org or call 01263 741711.

"This county is famous for its delicious marsh samphire which is at its best between July and August. Rinse it very well before boiling or steaming, and serving with melted butter, or the traditionally Norfolk way of doused in vinegar and sprinkled with black pepper"







Art Café
Glandford

North Norfolk's favourite vegetarian café and art gallery nestled in the heart of the Glaven Valley.

Serving breakfast, lunch, indulgent cakes and the best coffee in the area.

Paintings, ceramics, jewellery and textile art by local artist and makers.

Approved by the Vegetarian Society



Open daily 10am to 4pm

Manor Farm Barns
Glandford
Holt
Norfolk
NR25 7JP
01263 741711
www.art-cafe.org

The Control Tower - a unique vegetarian B&B

Formery a WWII Control Tower now lovingly restored.
The exterior has been returned to its iconic modernist look whilst the interior is filled with beautiful art deco fixtures and furniture to ensure your stay will be comfortable and relaxing.







The Control Tower, Bunkers Hill, Egmere, Walsingham, Norfolk NR22 6AZ
T: 01328 821 574 E: mail@controltowerstays.com
www.controltowerstays.com



Bed & Breakfast with a generous helping of history

River Green Café

www.rivergreencafe.co.uk
Tel 01603 622448



Norwich's premier vegetarian restaurant
Visit us for Fine Dining and
Easy Eating Meals or just coffee and cake

Open Tuesday to Sunday in the lovely village of Trowse

SPECIAL OFFER …Bring this advert along to get a free bottle of house wine with any 2 Fine Dining Main Meals purchased
See website for full terms and conditions, cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer.
Only available Tuesday to Thursday
Valid to March 31st 2015

UP FOR GRABS

This month, check out the fab selection of foodie gifts, including superfood powders, a year's supply of frozen treats and a homewares voucher worth £200



WIN! A YEAR'S SUPPLY OF BIRDS EYE PRODUCTS AND A MICROWAVE!

Think frozen vegetables are boring? Think again. Birds Eye is launching Steamfresh – a range of delicious vegetable, rice and pasta side dishes that can be steamed to perfection in the microwave. To celebrate, Birds Eye is offering one lucky winner the chance to get their hands on a year's supply of Birds Eye vouchers (worth £134) to try the delicious Steamfresh range. They're also including the Whirlpool MAX 38 SMG Microwave with Grill, £159, which has a rounded design to fit in small spaces, plus it includes functions such as crisp, grill and steam, so you can cook just the way you like.

For more information visit www.birdseye.co.uk. To enter visit www.cookveg.co.uk/giveaways

WIN! VOUCHER FOR OCHRE & OCRE

WORTH £200!



Ochre & Ocre are an eco-chic natural and organics homeware company with a gorgeous range of stylish textiles for your kitchen, such as: tablecloths, table runners, placemats, tea towels, oven gloves and more! What makes the company extra luxurious is the attention to detail, from the neat mitred corners to the extra-length oven gloves and well-padded mitts. All products are designed in Britain and made in Europe and are created using only 100 percent organic cotton and environmentally-friendly dyes. They're offering a £200 voucher to one lucky Cook Vegetarian reader! **To enter, visit www.cookveg.co.uk/giveaways. For more information visit www.ochreandocre.com**



WORTH £200!



WIN! SENSATIONAL SUPERFOODS FROM NATURYA!

If you're looking for exciting ways to boost the nutritional content of your kitchen creations, then we have the perfect prize for you! Nutrient-rich and organically-certified, Naturya superfoods are pa favourite amongst nutritionists, athletes, foodies and authors, whose tantalizing recipes often feature these vibrant and versatile health foods. We have eight sets of Chia Seeds, £5.99, Cocoa Nibs, £8.99, and Lucuma, £9.99, to be won! Why not try your hand at conjuring up a delicious Chia Seed pudding with Lucuma Ice Cream, or some delectable Cocoa Nib Truffles? You can find Naturya in Holland & Barrett, Ocado, Amazon, Asda, Whole Foods, Planet Organic and independent health food stores.

For recipe ideas and inspiration, visit www.naturya.com. To enter, visit www.cookveg.co.uk/giveaways

HOW TO ENTER... For your chance to win this month's fabulous prize draws get online today! **www.cookveg.co.uk/giveaways**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

These prize draws are open to all UK residents aged 18 or over, excluding employees or agents of the associated companies and their families. One entry per person. The prizes detailed in each prize draw cannot be exchanged for goods, or towards the purchase of goods at any retail outlet. Entries must be via our online entry page. It cannot be exchanged for cash, or replaced if lost or damaged. Entries that do not abide by these terms and conditions will be disqualified. Prizes must be taken as stated and cannot be deferred. The decision of the judge is final and no correspondence will be entered into. CLOSING DATE: 19th December 2014. Winners will be notified by 2nd of January, a list of winners will be available in writing on request from Andrea Turner, 21/23 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JY

COOKERY SCHOOL

Get ready for Christmas with this month's gourmet know-how



Welcome to the new-look Cookery School! And to kick off, we've rounded up our favourite Christmas tips.

I may be in the minority here, but I love cooking Christmas dinner. It's my favourite part of the day and I spend months planning it. I adore a meal full of constituent parts, with different flavours and textures, and to achieve this, I research dishes early on (trying one out with every winter roast) and freeze ahead.

I'm a stickler for side dishes. As a vegetarian, I absolutely love vegetables – all of them! And there's nothing I hate more than limp overcooked boring veg. So, I upgrade every side, from roast potatoes with sea salt and herbs, to celeriac and squash purées, and from stir-fried sprouts, to roasted sticky shallots.

Here, you'll find some easy upgrades for your veggies, our top shortcuts, some fabulous recipes and tips on making your best ever Yorkshire puddings.

WE LOVE *Christmas Shortcuts*



Just Wholefoods' Organic Apple & Sage Stuffing (£1.27, www.goodnessdirect) is delicious, vegetarian and really easy to cook; simply add to boiling water, leave to stand and bake in the oven. Not only does it make great stuffing, you can also pack into peppers or squashes for the perfect veggie main!



THE ESSENTIAL RECIPE

This month's essential recipe is a basic biscuit recipe: Mix together 55g butter, 115g sugar and 170g flour, roll out and bake until golden. Decorate for Christmas and use as tree decorations, or tie stacks together with ribbon for a thoughtful gift.

3 EASY SIDE DISH UPGRADES!

BANNISH BORING VEGGIES THIS CHRISTMAS WITH OUR SIMPLE TWISTS ON WELL-LOVED CLASSICS



1 MAPLE SYRUP-GLAZED CARROTS

Steam or boil your carrot batons until tender. Place a knob of butter, the juice of 1 orange and 2 tbsp Clarks Maple Syrup in a pan and heat. Add the cooked carrots and heat until well coated and heated through. Garnish with finely chopped fresh parsley.



2 GARLIC AND ROSEMARY ROAST POTATOES

Parboil your potatoes and heat a roasting tin with 1cm rapeseed oil in a preheated oven. Once hot, add your cooked potatoes, lightly bashed sprigs of rosemary and bashed garlic cloves still in their skins. Roast for 30-40 minutes until golden brown and crisp.



3 STIR-FRIED CHRISTMAS CABBAGE

Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large pan or wok and start gently frying 3 finely sliced shallots. Add 2 crushed garlic cloves and fry for a further minute. Add 200g vacuum-packed chestnuts and fry for three minutes. Add 1 shredded Savoy cabbage and turn up the heat. Stir-fry until wilted but still with a little bite.



Make your best ever... YORKSHIRE PUDDINGS!

- Use an oil that can get really hot in the oven – sunflower, rapeseed or vegetable – and ensure it's really, really hot before you add your batter.
- Add an extra egg white for taller puds, or an extra egg yolk for a richer batter.
- Add finely chopped rosemary to your batter for an instant update.
- Let the batter stand for 20 minutes at room temperature before pouring it into the hot oil.
- Take care to give the Yorkshires room to rise in the oven.
- Keep them oven-warm for as long as possible; make them the last thing you add to your plate. Left somewhere cold, they'll quickly collapse.

Don't forget...

- Check you have enough roasting tins and saucepans, and make sure they're the right size too.
- Write a plan of what you're cooking and when you're cooking it.
- Clear out the fridge to make space for prepped veg – drinks can go outside.
- Double check your crockery and chairs so you can fit everyone around the table.
- Find out where your nearest shop is that will be open on Christmas Day, just in case you do forget something!



KIT LIST

Invest in gadgets that will make the Christmas prep easier...



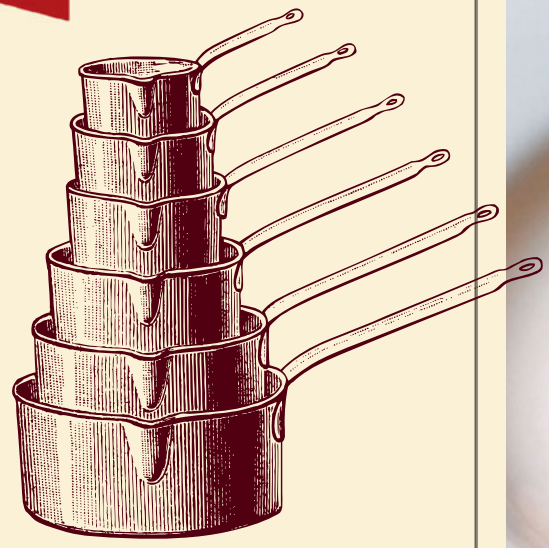
Kuhn Rikon Dual Knife Sharpener £15.50, Kitchen Buddies
There's nothing worse than trying to chop vegetables with blunt knives. Do yourself a favour and invest in a sharpener – just take care when washing up the knives after s



Joseph Joseph Switch Peeler £5, www.quinceliving.co.uk
Sharpening veg peeler blades is notoriously tricky, so don't bother and get yourself a brand new one. This bright option includes a potato eye remover.



Chef'n Freshforce Juicer £40, John Lewis
Get those lemons, limes and oranges squeezed in seconds and speed up your cooking. Also perfect for those cheeky Christmas cocktails!



GET AHEAD!

Most root vegetables, soups, breads, cakes, gravies, cranberry sauce, bread sauce and nut roast all freeze very well, just take care to label them. Even if you have a power cut for an hour or less, it will be safe to eat (so long as you keep the door closed). Then thaw on Christmas Eve and relax with your feet up!



EASIEST EVER FLAN!

CHOCOLATE SAVVY FLAN

For the shortcrust pastry case
200g plain flour
100g cold butter
2 tbsp cold water

For the filling
190g Savvy Spread Chocolate Honey or Chocolate Agave
2 large free-range eggs, beaten
2 tbsp milk

whipped cream, to serve

You'll also need: 20cm flan tin

1 Preheat the oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6. Cut the butter into the flour with a knife, and rub with your fingertips until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add the water and bring together. Knead lightly to form a bowl. **2** Roll out and press into your flan tin. Trim any excess and fill with baking beans. Bake for 10 minutes – you don't want the pastry to get too crisp. **3** Mix the Savvy with the eggs and milk until combined. Pour into the pastry case. Turn the heat down to 130C/275F/Gas 1 and bake the flan until the filling is risen and just set. Set aside to cool before serving with a little freshly whipped cream.



ILLUSTRATION: LOUISE ABBOTT

FOOD FACT!

Christmas puddings and mince pies used to be made to help preserve meat throughout the winter; the dried fruits safeguarded the meat from decay.

Luckily for us veggies, techniques for keeping foods improved in the 18th century, so the savoury elements of these dishes could be lessened and the sweet ingredients increased, leaving us with the meat-free mince pies and the often (but not always) vegetarian Christmas puddings we know and love today. Just take care to look out for 'suet' in the Christmas puddings, as it's not suitable for veggies.

Recipe of the THE MONTH

Add some tasty extras (and a splash of booze!) to a jar of mincemeat and make some super fruity mince pies



PERSONALISE THESE TARTS WITH YOUR OWN MINCEMEAT ADDITIONS...

CRANBERRY MINCE PIES

Makes 24 pies
Ready in 40 mins

200g plain four, sieved
25g ground almonds
125g butter, cut into pieces
125g golden caster sugar
4 free-range egg yolks

For the filling:
100g frozen cranberries
1 cooking apple, chopped
1 tbsp rum
410g mincemeat

For the topping:
1 sheet filo pastry, cut into 12
25g butter, melted
2 tbsp icing sugar, to dust

1 Put the pastry ingredients into a food processor with 2 tsp cold water. Pulse until combined. Wrap the dough in clingfilm and chill.

2 Meanwhile, put the fruit and rum into a pan. Add 1 tbsp water, heat until just softened then stir into the mincemeat.
4 Heat oven to 190C/375F/Gas 5. Grease 12x5cm tartlet tins. Roll out the pastry and stamp out 12x6cm rounds.
5 Line tins with pastry rounds and use baking beans to bake blind for eight minutes. Bake for two minutes more without beans.
5 Spoon the mincemeat into cases. Brush filo with butter, crumple and place on pies. Bake for 10 minutes. Use icing sugar to dust.

PER PIE: 175 CALS, 8G FAT



POST-CHRISTMAS PICK ME UP

Find out how a sprinkling of Linusprout flaxseeds can boost your mood

After all the fun and festivities have settled down, many of us can feel a little deflated, especially with the dismal weather, gained Christmas pounds and the inevitable long wait until pay day. But, with a few small changes you can make a huge difference to your wellbeing. Research indicates that omega-3 fatty acids may help reduce mild to serious depression. However, your body can not produce its own omega-3. This is where the amazing mood-lifting properties of flaxseeds (a vegetarian source of omega-3 fatty acids) come into their own!

The super seed

Flaxseeds are one of the richest forms of lignans. Lignas are a type of phytoestrogens (a plant derived compound) that contain powerful antioxidants, which have anti-tumor, anti-viral, anti-fungal and anti-bacterial properties. Evidence also shows that flaxseeds may help reduce the risk of heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes. As well as this, other benefits include: smoother skin, shinier hair, increased stamina, reduced symptoms of PMS, better fat burning, clearer thinking and, alleviation of hot flushes. The Linusprout sprouted flax from granoVita is a little bit different. It's made using a unique and natural process that biologically activates the seed from its humble beginnings to a super-nutritious food. During this journey the omega-3 fats are preserved; the essential enzymes that make digestion possible are activated, and the insoluble fibre becomes soluble – resulting in increased benefits.

And there's more!

As well as the original version, Linusprout sprouted flax have six different flavours, which all have extra benefits. So you will have an arsenal for fighting those post-Christmas blues (although they can't do anything about the weather though).

Goji Berry - A complete source of protein and extremely rich in antioxidants that may help with better vision, the immune system and even your libido!



Cinnamon - A good source of fibre, calcium and manganese (which could help strengthen weak bones).

Pumpkin & Sunflower Seed - The combination of these two seeds provides a great source of B vitamins, vitamin E and magnesium, which all help towards lowering blood pressure and has been known to reduce the risk of heart attacks and stroke. Pumpkin seeds also contain L-tryptophan, which is known to boost happy feelings.

Blueberry - Rich in antioxidants such as vitamin C, E, A, which boost your immune system. They also aid in reducing tummy fat and promote better brain function and vision.

Cranberry - Full of antioxidants and anti-inflammatory compounds that have been know to support better memory, smoothe skin, strengthen the immune system and lower blood pressure.

Sprouted Broccoli Powder - Contains sulforaphane glucosinolate, which has known to be beneficial in supporting the body's immune system and preventing illness. Broccoli is also a source of many phytochemicals (chemicals from plants) that may have anti-cancer properties.

For more information visit www.granovita.co.uk

Ask ROSE

This month, vegetarian cooking connoisseur **Rose Elliot** answers your kitchen dilemmas and shares her favourite festive snacks



Q HOW CAN I MAKE MY STIR-FRY MORE INTERESTING?

Claire McDonald, by email

A Vary your vegetables and try some new combos! I like finely-sliced carrots, small broccoli florets, red pepper, spring onions, mangetout and button mushrooms. Then, add crushed garlic, grated lemon rind and juice, and chopped parsley. For a Thai flavour, use pak choi, baby sweetcorn, red peppers, mangetout, flavoured with sesame oil, vegetarian red Thai curry paste, and coriander. For an Indian taste, opt for onion, mushroom, courgette, green cabbage and okra, with crushed garlic, grated ginger, chilli, ground coriander, cumin and turmeric. Finish off with some fried tofu.

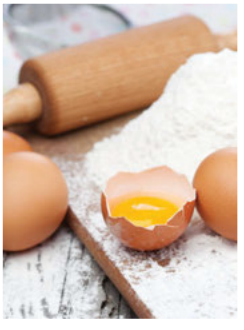




Q THE VEGGIE STEWS I MAKE ALWAYS TURN TO MUSH. DO YOU HAVE A DECENT RECIPE?

Donna Chaplin, by email

A The solution is to choose vegetables that take about the same time to cook; or to cut the ones that take longer, into smaller pieces. Also, you can add fast-cooking veg at the very end; a bag of baby leaf spinach, popped in at the last minute, can make a lovely addition. For a carrot, mushroom and red wine casserole, cut three carrots into long, flat slices, brown in olive oil, then quickly fry 250g button mushrooms in the oil. Put all the vegetables into a casserole dish with 1 tsp curry powder, a crushed garlic clove, 250ml vegetarian red wine, 400ml hot veg stock, salt and pepper. Cover and bake at 180C/350F/Gas 4 for 1 hour and 15 mins, until the carrots are tender. Scatter with chopped parsley and serve.



Q HOW CAN I STOP SHORTCRUST PASTRY FROM CRACKING WHEN I ROLL IT OUT?

Karen Davidson, by email

A Perhaps you're not adding enough water? Or maybe you're over-chilling the pastry before rolling it out? Try this: sift 225g flour into a bowl with 1/4 tsp salt. Rub in 125g butter, by hand or with a food processor, allowing some flecks of butter to remain. Add 4-6 tablespoons of cold water, until the mixture comes together. Chill for 30 minutes, form it into a round or square, flatten it a bit with your hands, then roll out on a floured board, or between two pieces of clingfilm. Bake at 200C/400F/Gas 6.



ROSE'S PARTY SNACKS

If you've got a crowd coming around for Christmas, please them all with these treats

SUSHI ROLLS:
Nori seaweed topped with sushi rice, asparagus spear, slice of red pepper, rolled up and cut into 2cm pieces, topped with a little hot wasabi – delicious, pretty and fun to make.

BABA GANOOSH:
Smoky aubergine dip (charred aubergine, whizzed up with garlic, olive oil, lemon and tahini) served with fresh crudités. This is one of my all time favourites.

CROSTINI:
Brush thin slices of baguette with oil and bake in a cool oven until crisp. Try toppings such as: goat's cheese and red onion confit; mashed avocado, cherry tomato and basil; or Stilton, mango chutney and a walnut.

TOFU STICKS:
Cubes of fried smoky tofu on cocktail sticks with a satay dip. To make the dip: mix peanut butter with vegetarian red curry paste, coconut milk and a large dash of tamarind.

Have you got a question to ask Rose? Email rose@cookveg.co.uk or find us on Twitter or Facebook

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Worth £30!



We are giving away a set of GlideX bakeware to each subscriber this month. GlideX have created distinctly different non-stick bakeware to give you the kind of high-quality cake tins and roasting trays you deserve. We love creating delicious food but, like you, we don't like being disappointed by expensive branded non-stick bakeware that just, well, isn't non-stick. The best bakeware should be effortless to use, lovely to look at, and so easy to clean that you barely notice you're doing it. Plus, it should last for years. **www.glide-x.com**

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Get baking this Christmas and make this show stopping cookie Christmas tree!



SUSCRIBE AND PAY JUST £9.00* EVERY 3 MONTHS

3D COOKIE CHRISTMAS TREE

Makes 20 individual cookies
Ready in 35 mins

225g butter, at room temperature
110g caster sugar
275g plain flour
ground spices

1 Begin by preheating the oven to 180C/350F/Gas 4.
2 Cream the room temperature butter in a large bowl with a spoon or in a food mixer, until soft. Add the caster sugar and beat until the mixture is light and fluffy.
3 Sift in the plain flour and ground spices and bring the mixture together to form a dough.
4 Using a rolling pin, hand roll the dough until it's a little thicker than a £1 coin. Using the 10 star-shaped cutters, cut two of each size. Bake in the oven for 13-15 minutes or until they are a light golden brown and slightly firm on top.
5 Once cool enough to handle, you can either ice every biscuit using royal icing or simply dust with icing sugar. Stack them up with the largest one at the bottom, fanning out the star ends. If you use silver ball decorations, double check they're suitable for vegetarians - some aren't. Little ones will love to help decorate the tree with icing, but you might have to talk them out of taking a nibble before it's finished!

EASY WAYS TO SUBSCRIBE...

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Lines are open Monday-Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday 9am-1pm



THE CAFFEINE FIX

Coffee lovers will be overjoyed with the handy **AeroPress, £20.99**. It delivers a cup of joe in minutes, there's less fuss than a cafetière, and it can be taken on travels to ensure a decent drink wherever they are!



PETAL POWER

Place one of **The Wild Hibiscus Flowers, £6.99**, in a glass of sparkling wine and watch the flower open and turn the bubbly a beautiful pink. Who's not going to love that?

GET FROTHY

If you know a family who adore their coffee, the sleek **Aerolatte Deluxe Stainless Steel Frother, £15.49**, will go down well. It comes in a stand and doesn't use steam. Just place it in a coffee cup for 30 seconds and you've got the perfect froth. Cappuccino anyone?



FOR THE COOK WHO HAS EVERYTHING...

Put a smile on a foodie's face (even if it's yours) with this luxurious selection of kitchenware, high-quality gadgets and ingredients from **Cream Supplies**





COFFEE CREATIONS

Why settle for regular coffee when you can have a vanilla latte or caramel cappuccino? The miniature bottles of syrup in this **Monin Coffee Gift Set, £4.99**, comprise: Caramel, Vanilla, Hazelnut, Gingerbread and Chocolate Cookie.

Discover all these beautiful goodies and more at **www.cream supplies.co.uk**

COOK WITH FLAIR

This Stainless Steel Whipper, £41.99, is the perfect kitchen accessory for the playful cook. It can create espumas (foams) and whip up cream in seconds, making dishes look oh-so-professional.

BURSTING WITH FLAVOUR

For those who like to make show-stopping desserts, the **Freshburst Pearls, £7.99**, will be a welcomed extra to their store cupboard. These little bombs of liquid flavour come in ten varieties, and each one will guarantee some oohs and aahs at the dinner table.



GOURMET TREAT

If you want to be in your loved-ones' good books **TruffleHunter's Black Truffle Mustard, £4.95**, is a great choice. It's made with a superior quality mild Dijon mustard and Italian black summer truffles. Try adding a teaspoon to any salad dressing and you'll be in heaven!



GINGER IN A JAR

This gorgeous oriental-style jar contains chunks of **Opies Crystallised Stem Ginger, £6.99,** coated in crunchy sugar, great for the baker with style or just to be enjoyed as it comes. Whichever way you use it, it's sure to deliver a tingle to the tongue!



SHOT SOPHISTICATION

The beautiful colours of **LSA's Paddle Shot Glass Sets, from £35**, will impress guests at a drinks party. And, in between soirées, it will look gorgeous on the kitchen side. The oak board features handles to minimise spillages.



PEEL AWAY

Kitchenalia fans take note; this **Apple Peeler and Corer is only £7.99**. It will make a lovely gift for someone special as it means no more faff when making homemade crumbles or peeling potatoes. Who knows, you may be invited back for a slice of pie?



HEY BARTENDER!

Anyone can make a Martini, but with the **Special Ingredients Molecular Cocktail Kit, £34.95**, your tipples are out of this world. Create pearls with liquid centres, make jellied spheres, turn liquids into foams and change the viscosity to suspend objects in your drink.





TURN BACK TIME

Let's face it, most kitchen timers aren't the most elegant of gifts, which is why we love this stylish **Eddinton's Magnetic Retro Timer, £5.99**. If you know someone who loves a dash of old-school charm, it will make the perfect addition to their vintage décor (it's practical too and doesn't need batteries).

THE BIG CHEESE

Looking for a vegan melting cheese that's just as good on its own as it is in your cooking? Try Melty Smoked Cheddar (£2.30-£2.60, local health food shops). It's also available from Tesco under its own Free From brand, called Soya Smoked.





ROCK THE GOAT

People who suffer from digestive problems associated with drinking cow's milk, sometimes find goat's milk an excellent replacement (although always check with your doctor first), whereas others just prefer the delicious taste. Ring the changes and give Delamere Dairy Goat's Milk (£1.55, ASDA) a go today!



THE MICROPLANE CUBE GRATER

(£19.95, www.goodcookshop.com) is a multifunctional grater that includes three blades: fine, ribbon and coarse. It comes with a transparent cover that doubles as a catch feature and measuring cup, making it perfect for small kitchens.



LET'S GO NUTS!

Premium, great-tasting coconut oil can be hard to come by, which is why we love Essence of Eden's Centrifuged Organic Coconut Oil, (prices start at £10.50 for a 300g jar, from independent health food shops).

COOK VEG Kitchen Essentials

Calling all vegetarians! These kitchen saviours are about to make your life easier...



I SHOULD KOKO!

Enjoy a lighter start to 2015 by making small changes to your diet. Go for Koko Dairy Free Original + Calcium (£1.39, Tesco) on your cereal or in your hot drinks and enjoy the benefits of a cholesterol-free product whose calcium levels and fat levels are matched to semi-skimmed milk.



MINCE YOUR WORDS

Revive your favourite family dishes with Quorn's range of meat replacement products. Quorn Mince (available from all good supermarkets) is sensational in shepherd's pies, luscious in lasagnes and if you add half a glass of veggie red wine to your Bolognese sauce, we would challenge any meat eater to spot the difference!



BACK TO SCHOOL

Improve your cookery skills and expand your horizons by going on a Cordon Vert Cookery Course. The Light, Healthy & Easy course (£125, www.cordonvert.co.uk) is taught by Principal Tutor Alex Connell, and is perfect for discovering meals that will help eat a little better in the new year.

granoVita

GET ORGANIC

Quinoa was the trendiest ingredient of 2014 and it's easy to see why. A nutty and protein-packed grain that's great for salads, we recommend buying granoVita's Organic Quinoa (£6.60, all good health stores).

JOIN THE CLUB

When it comes to campaigning, lobbying and advocacy, there really is strength in numbers. By becoming a member of The Vegan Society, you help the institution to be a force to be reckoned with! Membership is just £21 a year, or £14 for those on a low income. Visit www.vegansociety.com to join.

The Vegan Society

Chico's Cookery School

This issue, London Vegetarian Cookery School owner **Chico Francesco** answers the questions on everyone's lips in January – how to lose weight without missing out on good food...

Following the gluttony and indulgence of the festive season, many of us try to cut back on certain foods and turn to a leaner diet. However, these aspirations can be unattainable as no one wants to wage a war with hunger, especially as the colder months make comfort food seem even more appealing! Here is some realistic advice for you to try so you can still enjoy a little of something you fancy without feeling short-changed or unfulfilled!



DAIRY DELIGHTS

Philadelphia 3% cream cheese with semi-skimmed milk produces a fantastic cream alternative. Quark is a Bavarian cream cheese which is virtually fat-free and again, creates good spreads and is ideal for both cooking and creating low fat foods.



DRINK TO THAT

For the past five years, I have been looking for a solution to the high calorie content of alcohol. I have experimented with low-alcohol beers and wines but, in all cases they do not sit well on the palate. However, the 1% Herefordshire cider available at Sainsbury's and Waitrose is medium dry and very glugable!

DRESS IT UP

You can't really have a salad without a dressing, but they are often full of sugar and lots of fat. Switching over to a low-fat Greek yoghurt fused with intense flavours like sun-dried tomato, mustard or herb pesto can deliver the same sensory experience at a fraction of the calorie cost.



COOK'S TIP

In order to stick to a healthy eating plan, most of us need that sense of substance either at lunch or dinner time. Carbohydrates are high-glycemic (GI) which means you get your fill but, a few hours later, your body craves for that something that will act as a sweet or salty fix. Try to switch over to low GI carbohydrate ingredients like bulgur or buckwheat, millet or barley to keep you feeling fuller for longer. The London Vegetarian Cookery School have a workshop each January dedicated to address dietary concerns and show you how to improve your diet.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY LOUISE ABBOTT



Chico Francesco is the owner of London Vegetarian Cookery School and is an expert in world cuisine. He trained in Tunisia, Italy, Bombay and Britain, gaining an unrivalled knowledge of Middle Eastern, North African, Southern European, Asian and Far Eastern foods. For more information on his courses, visit www.londonvegetarianschool.co.uk

COOK VEGETARIAN TOP PICKS

Here you'll find an exciting selection of all the best veggie food, appliances and helpful gadgets that we've stumbled across this month





GREAT FAST FOOD

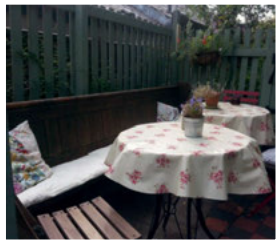
VegiNugs are vegetable nuggets with a Caribbean twist!

Donna Williams originally created VegiNugs because she was gluten intolerant and longed for a fast food she could choose, instead of the sea of bread and pastries. As this proved to be quite difficult, she created her own. She then developed the idea by making them dairy-, nut-, egg- and soya-free as well, even making them vegan-friendly, for everyone to enjoy! They're great for party food, snacks and main courses.

VegiNugs are made with yams, pumpkin, sweet potato, butter beans, green banana, plantains, rice and peas and of course, Caribbean herbs and spices.

Donna has a market stall at the Wimbledon Piazza on the first weekend of the month, where you can buy them hot or takeaway frozen. You can also contact Donna via her website for large orders. Visit www.veginugs.com





BOOKS & BAKES

Nestled on the edge of the Peak District is the village of Cromford, near Matlock. At its heart is the Scarthin Bookshop and Cafe. The bookshop is celebrating 40 years in business in 2014, while the cafe – a vegetarian and vegan paradise within the bookshop – has been running for over 20 years now.

The cafe has recently had a refurbishment and found new suppliers of delicious, scrumptious cakes. The main meals are vegetarian, vegan or gluten-free and all the homemade soups are vegan and gluten-free unless otherwise stated. The garden area has been decorated too.

For more information, visit hwww.scarthinbooks.com/scarthin-cafe/

SPREAD THE LOVE



Sunita introduced four new Organic Bruschetta Spreads to its range of Mediterranean fine foods this summer – Mixed Olive, Red Pepper, Porcini Mushroom and Tomato.

Made to authentic Italian recipes using only the finest organically grown ingredients, they can be eaten traditionally on toasted bread or rice cakes or you can use them to flavour sauces, as a relish, sandwich filler or pizza topping. They're ideal for adding flavour to any dish.

GM-free and suitable for vegans, Sunita organic bruschetta spreads are created without added preservatives, colourings or flavourings.

Available from all good health food and fine food stores. Visit www.sunitafoods.co.uk

THE BIG CHEESE



Award-winning veggie Harrogate Blue, by Shepherds Purse Artisan Cheeses, was launched back in 2012 and has quickly become a firm national favourite. Developed by sisters Katie Matten and Caroline Bell, it won Gold at the Global Cheese Awards in 2012 and Gold again at the British Cheese Awards 2014. It has also secured a coveted Great Taste Gold 2* award in 2013 and 2014, so you can be confident in the pedigree of this new cheese on the block.

Available from £16.50 per kilo nationally on deli counters or online at www.shepherdspurse.co.uk

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AWARD WINNERS!



Uncle Roy's 'Finest Preserves' collected another three Great Taste Awards in 2014 for his Elderberry Jelly and his Lovely Lemon Curd as well as his... Pineapple Curd.

This means that all four of Uncle Roy's Curds have won Great Taste Awards - but he is not content to rest on his laurels - and has now brought out two new curds that he believes are even better!

The new arrivals are a lip-smackingly lively Lime Curd and a brilliant Blackcurrant Curd and, like the others, are packed in handy half pound hexagonal jars.

Try them today for just £2.95 each from www.uncleroys.co.uk

ROCK THE GOAT



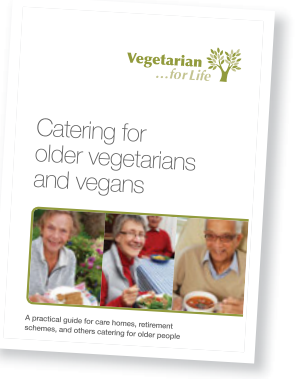
Goat's cheese forms the basis of lots of delicious vegetarian dishes, so it's important to go for a top quality variety.

Capricorn Somerset Goat's Cheeses are carefully crafted at the Lubborn Creamy which is situated in the lush dairy pastures nestled in the beautiful valley of Cricket St Thomas.

Unlike cow's cheese, it's very easily digested and is perfect on top of pizza, lasagnes, in pasta dishes or crumbled over a salad.

Try some today and taste the difference! Capricorn Goat's Cheese is available from Tesco, Waitrose and Ocado with prices starting at £1.90 for 85g.

GET CLUED UP



Vegetarian for Life – the UK charity dedicated to improving the quality of life for older vegetarians and vegans – has launched a new catering guide. *Catering for Older Vegetarians and Vegans* was written for care homes, retirement schemes, and others catering for older people. It outlines why anyone becomes vegetarian or vegan and contains catering tips for busy cooks, a section on health and nutrition, and a 4-week menu planner.

Order your free copy online at www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk, by phoning 0161 4458064, or by writing to Vegetarian for Life, 83 Ducie Street, Manchester M1 2JQ.

I SHOULD COCO!



Nutiva Coconut Manna is a delicious whole food, made of pure, dried coconut flesh. This tropical melt-in-the-mouth treat contains 12 percent fibre and 9 percent protein and nourishing fats.

Spread it on toast, use it in your smoothies and sauces, try it in your baking or simply enjoy its naturally sweet coconut flavour straight off a spoon.

Get yours for £9.99 from www.nutivauk.com

STAY HEALTHY



Winter is a great time for using Extra Virgin Avocado Oil. It adds body to soups and stews, and is loaded with Vitamin E, necessary to provide energy for winter sports and to keep the immune system boosted to avoid flus and runny noses. Try using it for baking those winter root vegetables, for a golden and delicious treat.

The Extra Virgin Avocado Oil (250ml) costs just £4.30, while the Extra Virgin Fair Trade Organic Avocado Oil which supports over 10,000 Kenyan farmers and helps their families achieve a good life (250ml) is only £4.99.

Available from Sainsbury's, Waitrose, Booths, Wholefoods and selected speciality stores.

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Attendance at board meetings in Cheshire as directed by the board.
Welsh-speaking ability advantageous.
Registered Charity No 1120687
Contact **admin@vegetarianforlife.org.uk** for information pack
Closing Date: 31 December 2014
www.vegetarianforlife.org.uk

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Vegetarian for Life
VfL is the advocacy and educational charity for older vegetarians and vegans
We are looking for a vegetarian to join our small board of trustees who meet four times a year in Cheshire
Experience of catering in the care or hospital sectors would be welcomed
This is a voluntary role – with expenses paid
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The Bite-sized VEGETARIAN

Lucy Porter may enjoy a gathering like the next person, but when it comes to the food, there are some serious party politics to consider...







Happy new year, dear reader. I hope you enjoyed the recent festivities. I always picture the subscribers to this marvellous publication as jolly, sociable types with quick wits and excellent hair who are in their element at parties. I too am a big fan of the Christmas and New Year celebrations as I can revisit two of my childhood passions – dressing up in sparkly clothes and eating my own body weight in cheese straws.

Abigail's party

I have always been a huge fan of party food. As a kid I viewed it as the savoury equivalent of Woolworth's pick-and-mix, and I would pile my paper plate high with Twiglets, vol-au-vents and slices of quiche. Growing up in Croydon during the 70s and 80s, I was often invited to a suburban bungalow, where a hostess wearing a lurid kaftan treated us to some vividly coloured, highly salted snacks originally conceived by Marguerite Patton, Fanny Craddock or The Galloping Gourmet.

Younger readers may find this hard to believe, but at that time we enjoyed eating cubes of cheese and pineapple on cocktail sticks entirely without irony. We genuinely thought that olives were exotic and that fondues were the height of sophistication. My mum was mortified when her unapologetically working class parents had an anniversary do and served up egg sandwiches (on thick, white bread spread with margarine) and pickled onions in an old Flora tub.

I have never been a snob when it comes to party grub. As long as it is bite-sized and salty, it is welcome on my plate. My only golden rule is that any dish you serve should be easy to eat in a party situation. I went to a do recently where they served cute little cartons of noodles, complete with miniature chopsticks. They looked lovely but presented a huge physical challenge. Naturally I wasn't willing to put my drink down, so I had to try and balance the carton in my drinking hand whilst using the other to manipulate the chopsticks. Inevitably, the noodles, wine and chopsticks all ended up on the carpet and I had to sidle off in search of the spring rolls.

Hand-held devices

The classics – mini quiche, samosas, tortillas and dips – may originally come from diverse countries, but they have one thing in common: they can all be easily handled whilst slightly tipsy, wearing uncomfortable shoes and shouting along to *Come on Eileen*. I am not usually one to trample on culinary ambition, but I wish people would stop experimenting with party food. There is no place for goulash in a buffet, it's a sit-down dish. I went to a wedding where they served tiny cups of soup with the canapés. Soup! For pity's sake! You're asking me to alternate a sip of Champagne with a sip of leek and potato? If you ask me that's the way to curse any marriage.

I will allow you an elaborate centre-piece like a chocolate fountain or a vodka luge, but other than that please stick to the essentials. You can't go wrong with a few bowls of nuts, some tiny sandwiches and something made of pastry. I also consider it essential that you provide a big tub of mixed chocolates. I will eat all the fruit creams. If you meet my strict criteria please feel free to invite me to your next party, wedding, christening or funeral via this magazine. I'll bring my own cheese straws if necessary.

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